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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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NOVEMBER 1898.

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## *Two Men o' Mendip.*

BY WALTER RAYMOND,

AUTHOR OF 'GENTLEMAN UPCOTT'S DAUGHTER,' 'LOVE AND  
QUIET LIFE,' 'TRYPHENA IN LOVE,' &c.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE PARTY.

'COME on, Zolomon! Step out then, Jims, with they long lags o' thine. An' here's Selina. Glad to zee ee, Selina—glad to zee ee, sure. What? An' who's this then? Why Cousin Selina's Emily Jane. Ha! ha! a-growed up out o' knowledge, an' put into long vrock. Goo down by the welsh-nut tree, one an' all o' ee. You'll vind Patty there, an' plenty o' victuals an' drink.'

Never had John Winterhead's best flop-tailed coat looked so blue, nor his buttons so bright. Never did his voice sound more rich and lusty than when he stood by the gate that afternoon and welcomed in and showed the way for Patty's birthday guests.

Across the common, along the drove, and both ways up and down the road, jogged men on horseback; and women-folk in two-wheeled carts, packed as tight as they could hold, came jolting over the ruts. Such was the sociable nature of people in those days that they waited for each other, and came along in shoals, talking at the top of their voices and laughing all the way. But once in sight of Charterhouse conversation ceased. The solemnity of a Sunday-clothes occasion began to weigh upon the guests; they became more silent than when going to church.

So only John Winterhead was to be heard, for, overburdened with good manners, all the rest were mute.

The welsh-nut tree, with its shade of shining green leaves, stood in the middle of home-field. Upon one side was the orchard, below that a small copse, and the ground sloped down into a level hollow between hills. Near by, a fire had been lighted and a kettle set on to boil.

The visitors sidled shyly up to Patty, standing with Aunt Maria under the branches, to wish her happy returns. Some brought presents, and produced them with such modesty and self-disparagement, that the gift might really have been thought no good if the giver had not presently sounded its praises to prevent any such mistake.

One o' Blagdon laid a mysterious sack-bag on the grass at Patty's feet while he shook hands.

'I've a-brought ee on a bit of a remembrance,' he stammered.

He held the mouth of the bag between his knees, the better to untie the string, and, what with pride and bending his head so low, blushed like a maid.

The knot was tight, but at last in went his arm. He groped awhile without success in the innermost corners of the bag, and anxiety became depicted on his face.

'Ha! I've a-got un,' he laughed in triumph, and dragged forth a struggling, squeaking little pig, which he held by the hind leg to the admiration of all.

'Tis only a little pig we do know,' he began with humility. 'But 'tis a very tidy little pig—a perty pig I do call un.'

He affectionately put his hand round the pig's neck, and lifted his head to look at the pleasing expression of its countenance.

All the company agreed that when you did come to look at un, like, 'twere really a wonderful perty little pig.

Fired by this appreciation one o' Blagdon became warmed to loftier praise. It then appeared that not personal beauty, but family pride and fine tradition were the crowning glories of this little pig.

'Ay!' he cried with enthusiasm, as well he might. 'The zow that's the mother o' thik little pig, have a-had a hunderd an' sixty-two little pigs, an' I've a-zold 'em, one wi' another, not less 'an a poun' a-piece—zo there.'

He clapped the pig back in the bag with an air of having made Patty's fortune, and wandered around the party saying to everybody he could buttonhole—'Hunderd an' sixty-two little pigs—zold 'em all—poun' a-piece.'

Cousin Selina's Emily Jane carried a flat paper parcel in her hand.

'Come on,' urged Cousin Selina.

That Emily Jane was awkward is beyond doubt, but it was consciousness of real merit that made her hang back. So Cousin Selina, a faded little overworked woman with fair hair, pushed the silly maid forward. 'Why, you've a-got nothing to be ashamed about, sure,' she cried with pride.

The package opened, the most beautiful piece of white crochet work ever beheld by eyes was brought to light.

'La!' cried Sophia Pierce, standing by.

'There then,' gasped Aunt Maria, holding up her hands.

And out of sheer wonder all the others, women and men too, burst out, 'Well done!' Not a voice withheld its praise except the bass of one o' Blagdon waxing louder and louder as he explained to new arrivals from a distance: 'Hunderd and xixty-two little pigs. Zo true as Godalmighty made little apples. Zold 'em all. Poun' a-piece. Poun' a-piece.'

Never before had so fine a work of art been seen on Mendip. As Aunt Maria said, 'Nobeddy could ever ha' thought that Emily Jane had it in her.' The subject was Scriptural, to hang on the back of a chair.

'No. They really wouldn't—if they didn' know,' agreed Cousin Selina. Though she was but a poor relation, and looked down upon, she plucked up with a mother's pride. 'You do all zee the subjec', she added, in a tone more superior than if she had married well. 'In cou'se.'

The design was a four-post bedstead, and a fine child with singularly chubby legs in an attitude of devotion on a patchwork counterpane. To look at it made Aunt Maria sentimental. 'La! I sim I could a'most hear the words,' she said, and repeated the old rhyming prayer taught to children in days agone,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,  
Bless the bed that I lie on.  
Zix angels roun' my bed,  
Two to voot, an' two to head,  
An' two to car me when I be dead.

'But do ee know who 'tis?' inquired Cousin Selina, her pale face beaming with delight at the notice she was receiving.

'No.'

Thinking it might be meant for one of the family, the company drew closer to search for a likeness.

'No,' they one and all repeated, shaking their heads.

'Why, 'tis the little Zammle to be sure,' smiled Cousin Selina, and she laid the work against Sophia's black skirt, the better to show off the picture.

'La! an' so 'tis,' they all agreed at once.

'An' look at his little eye, zo natural like,' said Aunt Maria with tender feeling; for Cousin Selina's Emily Jane, artist as she was, had worked a round hole where the eye ought to be, and the expression of spirituality thus given to the countenance was truly wonderful.

But of all the neighbours who gave presents, Solomon Moggridge, who was thought so dull, yet richly possessed the sense that belongs to a good heart, brought the sweetest—a little rosewood tea-caddy, silver-lined.

In those days a dish of tea was a treat, but this afternoon there was plenty, sure enough. And crock-cakes, brown as nuts and steaming hot, were brought out every whip's while, another ready to cut as the last were finished. There was no stint. All the guests sat round on chairs and forms under the welsh-nut tree, except Jims Matravis, who found himself a little one-legged milking stool. The ladies spread their white 'hankichers' upon their laps and smoothed them out like table-cloths. The men mostly carried red, and hung them elegantly over the small of the right knee. And what with their breeches and blue worsted hose, with here and there a waistcoat redder than their cheeks, and what with the fresh-washed white of the maidens, with faces rosier than the morning creeping up the hill, and the comeliness of middle-aged mothers in their Sunday gowns, and a granny here and there in a bit of stiff black silk—never in this world a brighter, happier lot o' folks sat down to blow into their saucers before they drank. Only Cousin Selina, who had not done well for herself, glanced around with a hungry eye, and tried to reckon in her head the cost of boughten things, wi' 'tay' at ten shillings a pound and sugar at—

But the solemnity of all this was terrible, for at first people felt too fine to talk, until from the other side of the tree, against which the fiddler sat and ate and drank in solitude, was heard a little squeak.

'Ha!' shouted John Winterhead, holding up his forefinger to listen. 'Zo he've a-got the crowd up to the chin o' un then.'

And so he had. Just a scrape or two with his fiddle-stick, and the crowder struck up a wonderful tune that kept running back into itself and went on over and over again. Then heads began to

nod, and feet to shuffle. But nobody liked to make the first move. And really they might have been there to this day if Solomon, urged and elbowed on either side, had not at last jumped up and offered an arm to Aunt Maria. At that everybody laughed and felt at home. And Aunt Maria, not to be outdone, took Solomon at his word and footed it toe and heel in a four-hand reel as everybody said, 'Zo dapper as any young maid, until the sweat did run down Solomon's face by the gallon.' If it hadn' a-bin for a cup o' cider, as he told everybody himself, he must ha' dropped.

However, after moderate refreshment he stood up again as fresh as a daisy. And they had 'Hunt the squirrel' and the handkerchief dance, and every mortal thing they could think of. All the men and some of the maids got out, but Cousin Selina, glad of the chance, must needs set everybody right, more than was called for, as many thought, particularly in 'Upzides an' down the Middle,' a-making herself really too fess wi' her tongue, a-showing folk what they ought not to do afore they had a-done it. This was unseemly, not to say downright 'ondacent,' in one who had never done well for herself.

Everything went merry as a bell. Sophia did not come out, being in black, but looked after the house. So Patty was free from care, except that when the fiddler stopped, and the rest sat down to puff and blow, and to wipe their faces and fan themselves with their han'kerchers, her eyes stole away to the little dark copse below the orchard.

She knew that Standerwick was there. The thought made her unhappy. He would stay there all these hours in vain. She could not bear to be unkind. She might slip away unseen for one minute and not be missed; yet she dared not go. It came as a relief when the crowder twanged his string again, and the young chaps bustled around to pick up partners. Another opportunity had passed. She could not go for a while if she would.

Deeper and deeper grew the shadows under the welsh-nut tree, and dew settled upon the grass as wet as rain. 'Tis really wonderful,' cried Aunt Maria, 'how it do work through a body's shoes,' and she and the staid folk began to toddle off indoors. But the young only laughed the more and danced the harder until it grew quite dark.

Then John Winterhead, scarcely to be seen against the black orchard at the top of the slope, came out and shouted:

'Now then all o' ee, 'Tis blind-man's holiday. There idden

a man o' ee can tell for certain what maid he've a-got by the waist. Come in. Supper's ready. Come into house or they'll eat up all the victuals.'

So the dance broke up, and two by two the company slowly found their way into the great kitchen.

The board and trestles had been brought in. The table reached from window right back to wall. Cousin Selina glanced to right and left, eyeing everything with mixed feelings of pride and envy. Cold roast and boiled, ham, chicken, pies, ducks—there was a sight to see. Selina felt a thrill of cousinship, and then sighed because she was poor. But all the rest fell to as merry as sandboys. Solomon outdid himself. Talk about dull! He made more noise than all the others put together. Passed more plates, drank more cider. He went all round the table more than once drinking healths, and then got up to make speeches—only Jims Matravis, reaching his long arm behind Aunt Maria, pulled him down by the coat-tail. On so great an occasion it was pardonable, but truth demands it should be recorded—Constable Moggridge got a little fresh.

Supper over, in a twinkling they cleared the kitchen to play games. But for an hour they had a rest and a song or two, whilst the men drew a whiff from churchwarden pipes, and all of ripe years took a spoonful or so of the right sort.

John Winterhead made up a party inside the chimney for three-card loo; but with the young and nimble 'Bline-buckey Davey' was all the cry.

'An' let I be blindfold first,' cried Cousin Selina's Emily Jane, for having risen into fame about the chair cover, she was in high spirits and panted for notoriety. So Solomon tied up her eyes with a duster, and held up his great broad hand before the face of her.

'Buck, buck, how many vingers do I hold up?' asked the constable, and the rest breathlessly awaited the answer.

'Vive,' guessed Cousin Selina's Emily Jane.

'You can zee,' cried Solomon, for five it was sure enough.

But this was overruled, for, as Cousin Selina said, no maid in her senses would be such a fool as to tell right if she really could see.

'Then what good to put the question?' argued the constable.

Though sound in reason, this was universally perceived to show a poor insight into human nature. Emily Jane, without more ado, was twirled round in the middle of the floor until she

didn't know her head from her heels, and then the fun became uproarious.

How they all scoured and screamed and ran, excepting Patty, who kept nervously edging her way towards the door.

The longing to run out and meet Standerwick grew keener and keener as the time went by. He had been kind to her. He only wanted to wish her luck. She could never look him in the face again if she did not go—never enter the cave after such a slight. How awkward all the men here were, with their elbows up as they dodged away! He stood straight and supple as an ash sapling. Groover or no, he was better than they, and he loved her. Her heart beat fast at the thought. Come what may, she must go.

Somebody came behind on tiptoe and slapped Emily Jane on the back.

Emily Jane turned round and round, like a kitten after her own tail, and pounced on Patty just as she got to the door.

'Patty Winterhead,' she cried, and pulled the cloth from her eyes.

Patty was caught. In vain she told them she was not playing at that moment—that she would be back in a jiffy if anybody would take her turn. No one would hear of any such nonsense. Willy-nilly, she must be blinded—birthday and all. With shouts and laughter they clapped on the duster. She felt so out of spirits, she could have cried.

In her excitement she ran hither and thither, but never so much as a sleeve could she touch with a finger-tip. She was beside herself. The time must be gone. He would think it was pride. She held a heart full of misery in a house full of mirth. She rushed into the chimney corner and took her father by the neck.

Somebody dragged her back by the tail of her skirt. She turned and caught somebody by the arm—sure enough. Cousin Selina, quick as thought, hopped 'pon the little footstool, and, being so tall—well, Patty guessed.

'Sophia Pierce.'

'Haw! haw!' Solomon Moggridge laughed his great laugh.

She darted at him and caught his yellow whiskers.

Solomon, honest soul, with the simplicity of a great overgrown boy, croopied down to make himself small, and went on his knees, as Jims afterwards said, 'fore all the wordle, like the little Zammle.'

But once bitten is twice shy. Patty was 'up-zides wi' un' this time.

'Constable Moggridge.'

'Zo 'tis,' cried one.

'Ay, that's who 'tis,' echoed another.

Then they all clapped their hands.

So Patty was free at last. 'I shall stan' out a bit,' she cried, and sat down out of the way close to the old oak clock in the corner. She leaned forward and glanced anxiously up at his silver face. The long hand was beginning to climb the last half-hour before midnight. There was still time, but none to waste. The maid who worked in the dairy was standing open-eyed, open-mouthed in the open doorway. There could be nobody to see her go.

She slipped out, ran across the garden, and into the orchard, as if the doing so had never been open to doubt. All her fears were lost in eagerness to get to the copse before it was too late. The moon was up and nearly at the full. The slanting light splashed in patches between the heavy-leaved apple-trees, planted in even rows like a grove. It shone upon her white frock as she ran by.

At the end of the orchard was a hatch, half hidden under sprawling brambles from an overgrown hedgerow that parted off the wood. Here she stopped—panting with haste and excitement, not knowing what next to do. The copse was darker than the orchard, and thick with underwood. The little wicket dragged upon the ground; it had not been opened for months.

The midnight stillness was broken by a rustling amidst hazel boughs. Little Patty Winterhead shook more than the leaves, as Standerwick clambered through a gap in the hedge and came to her.

Suddenly in the house behind her the fiddle struck up afresh. Then an outburst of mirth and voices, so loud and clear in the silence that its nearness startled her. She turned her head. The window-lights of Charterhouse were gleaming between the black trunks of the apple-trees.

'I can't bide here. I can't,' she whispered in alarm. 'Mayhap somebeddy mid come out upon us.'

He put his hand under her arm.

'Let's go out on the hill,' he said in her ear.

Skirting the copse he led her to the head of the orchard, and through a gate into the open country. There the house was out of sight. The music, although not out of hearing, sounded far away. The grass beneath her feet had been cropped short by sheep, and limestone boulders, white in the moonlight, lay scattered everywhere like a sleeping flock.

He put his arm around her. She had no will to say him 'nay.'

'Let us zit down.'

They were by a large flat stone and they sat down side by side.

'I've a-brought ee a keepsake,' he said, pressing a small packet into her hand. 'Tis little worth, except in memory o' the day. But I got it out o' groun' myzself, an' had it made a purpose.'

She was about to open it, but he stopped her.

'Put it away now,' he said, 'an' hang it, out o' sight, round your neck for a token.'

'But how can I thank ee, if I don't know what 'tis?'

'Tis nothing to thank for unless do bring luck.'

He had thrown his hat upon the turf, and she was bare headed just as she ran out from the party. The music in the house had stopped. He laid his hand upon her shoulder, and they looked each into the other's face in the calm pale light, so close, that she could feel his breath upon her cheek.

'Hark!'

From beyond the cliffs sounded the boom of Cheddar clock.

'Tis striking twelve,' he said in her ear. 'Do ee know what they do say? That the maid first kissed upon the stroke o' midnight shall be wed afore the year is out.'

He drew her nearer still and snatched a kiss where the hair parted over her forehead.

The saying was well known to her, and at the party any maid left out of the frolic might think herself neglected, sure enough. But Patty Winterhead pulled herself away, and blazed up in sudden anger, as if it were a thing of weight.

'I didn' come for that. I had no thought you'd take advantage or I wouldn' a-zot down. I just slipped out because we were friends. But I shall know again.'

With this threat to come no more, she sprang up and would have gone.

'I meant no harm,' he said humbly, 'nor ever could. I wouldn' raise a finger to offend ee—no, not to save my life. But I do zee how 'tis. Any or all o' 'em up to house mid ha' kissed ee, an' no matter—but since 'tis I——'

His words broke off in bitterness, and at once she felt sorry and ashamed. He had risen and was standing by the stone. What he said was true. With another she would only have laughed. There was nothing to get so mad about in a little thing like that. Only—only, he loved her. And she could never rest from thinking of him. So it was different. His very touch startled her. And now he thought her anger only pride,

She turned and came a step towards him.

'There, I didn' think to speak so sharp,' she said quite softly, wishing to make amends, 'but you gallied me, an' then it came out straight.' Then she laughed lightly to pass the matter by. 'Oh ay, I do know what they do say. There's nothing in that. I shall never be wed if I do live to fourscore.'

'Don't ee go away. Come back for a bit,' he begged of her.

She wavered a moment. 'I mus'n't bide long,' she said, and they sat down again.

'If I had a-bin bred to Ubley, instead of earning it for myself,' he went on very slowly, 'you would a-took me, an' nobeddy a-found a word o' fau't. Yet I couldn' love ee more, if I had a-bin born to all the wealth o' Dolberry Hill. An' which do take the better man, to have or to get? If you had the will to wed there's none can stop ee now. An' there's never another 'll love ee as I do.'

She knew it for a truth. She could hear it in his voice—see it in his face. Her heart gladdened with the knowledge. Yet what could she say? The fear of her father, the habit of her life were still upon her. For the world she dared not tell him that she loved him.

She looked down upon the ground and did not speak.

In the moonlight, a few paces from her feet, her eyes made out a darker line upon the turf.

'Look!'

She held out her finger, and traced upon the parched grass the greener round of a pixy ring.

'We be in a gallow-trap,' she laughed. 'If either of us have a-done wrong 'tis sure to come out.'

He started as if struck unawares, then with a low cry he hid his face in his hands.

What had she done? What had she said? Fool that she was, she had called back to memory his shame and disgrace. The superstition that any man of crime stepping into a fairy circle should surely come to justice was thrust out of her mind. She had carelessly struck the wound that never could be healed. In the keenness of her self-reproach all fears and backwardness were thrown to the winds.

Carried away by love and overwhelming pity for his lot, she threw her arms around his neck.

'I said it wi'out thought,' she sobbed. 'I'd keep the past from ee if I could; for I do love ee—I do love ee wi' all my heart!'

'I do care for nothing,' he cried, 'if I've a-got that!'

She felt his kisses burning on her cheek—her lips, but she nestled closer and hid her face upon his shoulder. He pressed his cheek against her hair, and she lay quite still, like a child, in his arms. She had no care for the future. The moment was enough. A feeling of safety and content crept over her. The open hill, where nobody could pry, with the pale stars overhead, was more secret than any hiding-place.

The dancing struck up again, and the sound called home her thoughts.

'I mus' go,' she whispered eagerly, and struggled to be free.

'I can't let ee out o' my arms.' And he pressed her nearer still.

'I shall be missed; an' then they'll hunt for me, an' question when I do come.'

'Zay you'll come to the cave to-morrow.'

'I will the day after,' she promised.

'Then kiss me.'

And he let her go.

She stood up and smoothed the creases from her frock, and pushed back her hair where it had fallen loose. Then they walked quickly towards the orchard gate.

'Good-bye, dear.'

'Good-bye.'

She ran homewards, keeping in the shadow of a line of trees until she reached the arched doorway in the wall beyond the barton stalls. Then she stopped and opened the packet, still clutched in the palm of her hand. It contained a little silver charm—a heart and lovers' knot. She pressed it to her lips, kissed it again and again, then hid it away upon her bosom out of sight.

She looked back, and in an ecstasy of longing held out her arms towards the place where they had parted.

'I love him!' she cried. 'If I cannot have him I shall die.'

Then she lifted the latch, ran across the yard, and went on tiptoe into the house.

She found the kitchen in an upstir. The fiddler was at work harder than ever, and two or three young couples were dancing the very soles from their feet. The more thoughtful of the company, however, were gathered together in bunches to discuss with the greatest heat a point of the greatest nicety.

'I do call constable to blame,' cried one o' Blagdon, dogmatically. 'Iss I do.'

'An' zo do I.'

'An' I too.'

'Though Miss Maria Winterhead had no need to make so much fuss about a little thing o' that sort,' put in Jims Matravis, and opinion veered.

'No more she had.'

'No more she hadn'.'

As for Solomon himself, he stood in the middle of the floor, so helpless as a thing of wood, staring from one to another like a mazed sheep. And Cousin Selina was shaking her finger at him too.

'La, Mr. Moggridge, I should never ha' thought it o' ee,' she said, 'for I always heard you were so quiet as a snail.'

The truth is, Solomon, fired by social success and cider, had seized the midnight moment for the kissing of Aunt Maria. And Aunt Maria sprang up like a wild cat, and cried out that it was 'terr'ble bad taste,' and if John did not take it up, she'd go to bed.

'An' then your Aunt Maria,' as Jims Matravis afterwards informed Patty, 'showed up most wonderful red about the wattle, an' put up her veathers, zo she did, an' went up to roost.'

But in the hubbub the girl stepped in unobserved. Nobody had noted her absence except her father, who, turning round from his card-playing to shout, 'Enough said, enough said,' caught sight of her and beckoned.

'Ha, you little mouse! Zo you ran away to hidey then when the clock struck midnight!' he said in her ear.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE EMPTY HOUSE.

THE party was over. The folk were all gone—and so was Aunt Maria.

They had kept it up full late, and danced through the night into broad daylight.

'An' now have a bit o' breakfast,' shouted John Winterhead.

So one and all set to work. They brought back the trestles and board, the boiled and roast ducks and ham, all that was

left of them, and sat down to start the day upon a good round meal. They were merrier than overnight. 'An' better off,' as John Winterhead declared to solace Solomon, who was a little quiet, 'than Maria, though she *had* gone to blanket fair.' Then the guests all drove away in the sweet sunshine of early morning, singing as they went.

An hour later, a hired trap drew up before the front gate. Cousin Selina, a sly thing, had taken the order to Cheddar, and never breathed so much as a word. The driver and the dairy-maid brought down stairs the carpet-bag, the boxes, and the badger-skin trunk. Cousin Selina must have slipped up in the night to help pack—a double-faced woman, to laugh wi' Solomon, an' side wi' Aunt Maria. Last of all came Miss Winterhead herself. 'John ought to ha' took it up,' she said, as she wished Patty 'good-bye.' 'An' if I live to be Methuselah I shall never hold no different. Kiss your aunt.' With her head in the air she sailed down the garden path and departed from Charterhouse as unexpectedly as she had arrived.

So Patty was left to the companionship of Sophia Pierce. Sophia stayed home from Ubley that morning to help to put things to rights, and they talked as they hurried to and fro, just as they used to do before trouble came to Sophia, or jealous thoughts entered Patty's head.

'I tell ee what 'tis,' the girl went prattling on, as she piled up a stack of plates to carry into the back kitchen. 'I don't feel a bit tired—not one mo'sel bit—not any more 'an if I'd a-bin a-bed all night. Nor eet a-sleepied. La! I do verily believe, once wound up an' started, I be like the old clock, an good to go for a week.'

Sophia glanced up in wonderment. Of late Patty had spoken scarcely a word to her.

'Odds bobs!' she laughed. 'An' when you be down, the tongue o' ee can't zo much as go "tick."'

A consciousness of having been unkind came stealing over little Patty Winterhead. She felt sorry and ashamed. Her love for Standerwick had taken such possession of her mind and soul, that it left no room for hardness or ill-will. It was more than heart could hold. She longed to be able to tell. She wanted to stop Sophia, there and then, bustling around the table, knife-box in hand, and to cry out to her, 'I love him! I love him!' Only, Sophia Pierce, more business-like than ever in her black frock, was not the one to understand. How wild she had been against the

groovers at the garden gate that night of Hang Fair! Yet such a woman would keep Charterhouse as she had never done. That might make it easier to leave home. Patty wished with all her heart that her father would marry to-morrow.

'There, an' what's come to ee now?' cried Sophia, striding across to the dresser. 'I didn' say any harm, sure. An' you be dumb to once. Why, 'tis all up or all down wi' ee, Patty Winterhead. Now take las' night. Zo much as ever you could be got to play. An' then you couldn' be vound. An' then it looked as if earth couldn' hold ee, you did dance so wild. Where did ee go when you went out?'

Sophia had faced about and was staring with that sharp inquisitiveness which took note of everything.

Catching her eye Patty blushed and was disconcerted. Then her father's words came back to her aid.

'I ran out, till—till the foolery were over,' she said, and glanced up again as she spoke.

Sophia was still closely watching her.

'I thought you mus' ha' slipped out to sweet-hearty,' she laughed, 'only your cousin Selina counted up all the young chaps.' Then she went on with her work.

A strange misgiving came over the mind of little Patty Winterhead that Sophia had seen more than she told, or at least suspected more than she said. It was one of those flashes of insight which come of a quick imagination. But in the same moment she cast it aside as a foolish fear.

'Sophia!'

'What is it?'

'Let's look sharp. An' I'll walk across to Ubley wi' ee, when you do go.'

'All right,' said Sophia.

The morning was still young and all the day before them when they were ready to start. At first, until they left the road, Sophia's homestead was out of sight. But when the walls were passed and they turned into the drove, here a chimney-stack and there a slope of roof peered between the sheltering trees. Hundreds of times had Patty seen the place, and been there too often enough, but now she looked at it, as they say, 'with all her eyes.'

'Have ee settled anything yet, Sophia?' she asked suddenly, when they had gone some way in silence.

'He's willing to take it off. An' he'll go in at Milemass.'

'But that was what you wanted,' said Patty in surprise, for the answer sounded discontented.

'Tis better than a sale, for certain. But he'll get it half the worth, you mid be sure.'

Patty thought of the saying that the Pierces were so having, get what they would, they could never be easy in their minds. Then she felt sorry for Sophia, upon whom so much had fallen.

They could now see the whole front of the farm. The sun had caught the row of dormer windows jutting from the thatch, and the panes of glass gleamed out like stars. And this might some day be her home! In summer-time the place was at its best, and to-day it shone a welcome that won the girl's love.

'I do like Ubley myzself. I a'ways did,' she burst out with a warmth of feeling beyond all that Sophia could understand. 'No wonder you do feel to quit the place where you've a-lived so many years.'

'Not that,' returned the other with a sniff for such sentiment. 'Only, I've a-got to do it all now. Mr. Winterhead, he's so mad that this Standerwick should come here, he won't speak to sich a fellow, so he do zay.'

'Will he take the furniture?'

'Every stick.'

They trudged on until they came to Ubley. Sophia dragged from her pocket the front-door key, turned the lock, and led the way into a straight passage with a door at the other end.

'What have ee got to do?' asked Patty.

'Oh! a plenty. Go all out roun.'

'I don't know but what I'd zo zoon rest,' sighed the girl, and sat down on the bottom step of the stairs.

'Very well. Bide where you be. Please yourzself an' you'll please me,' cried Sophia shortly as she trapsed away about her business. From the garden, as an after-thought, she called back: 'There's a ho'se-hair couch in the parlour, you could lie down an' go to sleep.'

But sleep was far away from Patty's eyelids. She was tired with dancing, and with being up all night, but never in her life had she been more wide awake. Sophia's company wearied her and she wanted to be alone—that was all.

Since midnight she had not found a moment to think of what had happened. She was lifted into the 'zebbenth heab'm,' as they say, upon the new wonder and delight of loving and being loved. Her head was in the clouds; her feet scarce rested upon the

earth. And yet to walk a mile with Sophia had dragged her down upon the stony road of every-day life. Sophia always made one see the plain side of things.

In the stillness of this empty house, her courage sank at the thought of the difficulties in her way. Where did it lead? How would it end? This love which went to the very bottom of her heart. There had never been anyone besides—there never could be another. The whole happiness of life hung upon her marriage with this man. Without him there was nothing—nothing. That her father would not even speak to him on business, was almost more than mind could grasp. It had been her father's pride, ever since she could recollect, that John Winterhead was not proud. And this was unnatural—out of all right and reason. He would never consent. There was no hope of that. And she would never have the strength to withstand him. Yet underneath her fear, was the will to follow Standerwick to the other end of the world.

Upon one side and along the frame of the open door grew a rose-bush thick and green, and small loose flowers hung below the durn-head, in clusters, blood-red. The bright colour caught her eye. She loved a house covered with growing things. She got up and went outside to look. Ubley was smiling in the morning sunshine.

Her troubles fled. A dream of married life—of a home all her own, arose before her. Everything became straight and simple. Her father would be angry and storm; but he could not hinder her. When he found her bent upon it, and that all the happiness of life hung on her love for Standerwick, he would give way. And when he saw her contented and doing well, he would understand, and come to love the man himself.

Straightway she felt a longing to peep into every nook and cranny of the place. She ran into the garden, across a grass plot with a hen-coop or two, and round by the stalls. In her present mood everything enchanted her. It had all run wild, to be sure, since Sophia was going to leave. And so much the better. She could have it her own way, and plant a many more flowers too.

But she must not stay about, and leave no time to go indoors. She wanted to see it all, ay, and look out of every window, front and back. The kitchen, the parlour, and the little middle chamber above she knew. In those days, when things were kept for use, kitchens and parlours were as like each other as peas. She went upstairs, along the creaking passage into the cheese room, and the inner place, not much bigger than a cupboard, with a faint smell,

where last year's apples had been stored. She went up into the attics, with the slanting ceilings and windows in the roof. Then down again, and into the sleeping rooms one after another.

Hark! Surely someone was moving in the house below.

She stopped to listen.

There was a step upon the stair.

Half afraid, she ran out into the passage—and there, full-butt, she bounced against Sophia.

'Why, Patty Winterhead, whatever be up to?'

'I—I thought it was no harm to look roun' the house,' she faltered, getting very red, for Sophia was eyeing her with suspicion and surprise.

'None at all. Anybeddy would a'most think you had a-took Ubley yourself.'

Then little Patty Winterhead felt uncomfortable—as if Sophia Pierce had a double meaning in the words.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE PROMISE.

'No, dear, I don't think I can ever bear it much longer. Only when I be away, for the life o' me, I couldn' help coming. An' when I be here, 'long wi' ee an' got nothing to fear, then I do sim as if I could never go home again. An' that's how 'tis—day after day—till I do a'most think my heart'll break to hold back so much.'

She was sitting on his knee with her face half hidden against his breast, and she raised her arms, and drew his head down until his lips pressed against her cheek.

'An' Sophia Pierce do watch, like a cat waiting for a mouse; I know she do. Only now I do stop till they be all a-bed, she can't get hold o' anything. An' eet, I could be so happy as the day—an' zo I be—if it wasn't for thinking o' poor vather, an' what he'll feel when he do know it.'

Three weeks had passed since the birthday party, and it was now the end of July. The entrance to the inner cave was finished. The steps were cut, the floor smoothed, so that it was like an upstairs room. At the further end it narrowed into a little passage, leading, as Standerwick discovered, into a deeper cavern beyond.

This cell was lighted with candles, each one firm in a socket of

its own grease. Except for the flame, which never flickered in the still air, they might have been taken for the stalagmites amidst which they stood. The white stone, behind, around, and above, glistened and cast strange reflections upon the roof and walls. In places the light shone through curtains, half transparent and thin as lantern-horn, only red. But Patty had been here many times by now, and the wonder of all this was gone.

It was night; though, for that matter, in broadest day the inner cave was dark. But then he had his work, and fear of Sophia's inquisitiveness, if she were much away with no errand to show, made Patty fearful of leaving home for long. Sophia was so sharp. She saw so much and thought of so much more. And in little Patty Winterhead there was no room for a lie.

At Charterhouse, as in all the homesteads upon the hill, when there was no company folk went to bed by twilight, and got up with the lark. So fully did they follow the old proverb of 'early to bed and early to rise,' that in winter-time more candle was burnt before daylight than after dark-night. Now the hay was carried and the oats just coming fit to cut. John Winterhead, sitting in the porch at dusk, already noted that the days began to draw in. He was wont to fill just one pipe more—that smoked, they went to bed. Then Patty listened until the house was still, and trembling lest a hinge might grate or creak, she crept down bare-foot, softly drew the door behind her and ran out. But the secret weighed heavy upon her heart. Only when she was safe within the cave, with many hours before dawn, could she cast aside her care and feel the full happiness of his love.

'I've a-done all that you wanted me,' she went on in a low voice. 'I've a-come night after night. If anything should happen to make ee change to me, I could never live. I'd come here all by myzself, zo as to be lost, an' lie down an' die.'

'I could never change, not even to love ee more—for there's no room for it,' he cried, caressing her.

'But vather 'll be rough wi' ee. He'll call ee everything he can lay his tongue to,' she urged, no longer doubting, but to hear him say it the more.

'It'll be all o' no account. He can never make me angry now, whatever he do zay. Patty, what need is there to wait?'

'What do ee mean?'

As she spoke she raised her head to look into his face.

'I do mean—if the first he heard were that we were man and wife, what could he zay then?'

'How could that be?'

'We could marry by licence. There's none could stop us, now you be of age. Do ee know the pa'son to Shipham?'

'No.'

'Nor he you?'

'Not that I do know o'.'

'An' if he do know the name, he'll never think. We could say Witham; for Charterhouse is in Witham, though they be twenty mile apart. Martha, daughter o' John Winterhead, o' the parish o' Witham, o' full age. I'd only tell un over night, an' let drop that for good reason I didn' care to have any talk. He'd have no choice but to marry us, when I did come, licence in han'.'

'I could never do it; I could never go drough wi' it,' she murmured beneath her breath, as if unconsciously giving tongue to her inner thoughts.

'I've a-worked it all out,' he went on very softly and with great tenderness. 'I'd meet ee, dear, a mile from your house, an' drive ee all but into Shipham. An' there you could get down, an' we'd walk to church apart. You could have on your oldest rock. Why, there's nobeddy but sexton 'ud know there was a wedding; an' I'd get over he not to tell; an' parson, he'd read the book, an' pocket his pay an' go, wi' never another thought in the head o' un. There's nothing to come between us then—but death.'

He pressed her closer still, and kissed her again and again. He had put into words the dearest longing of her soul. To be his, to do for him and change his lot, and to have him for her own so long as their lives could last.

'Where should we go then?' she asked quickly.

'I'd drive ee back, an' nothing so much as guessed, we'd go on just as we are. 'Tis but two months now, an' Ubley 'll be mine. Then you can come away to your new home, an' let your vather know how and when you were wed.'

'But if he should find out? If any should learn it out an' tell?'

'I'd find ee a place for the time being,' he pleaded eagerly; 'a place you'd have no call to be ashamed o' for the few weeks, or whatever mid chance to be.'

'It wasn't that—I wasn't thinking o' that. It 'ud be all alike if we were together, and I'd ask no more—if only vather were content. But I should be afeared to face un when he knew.'

What with her passion and her fear, he could feel her shiver in his arms.

'He'd never know until we told him,' he cried with all the force of firm belief. 'An' like enough I mid get the house afore the time is up. He's empty a'ready; an' in coming to a settle-ment I could agree to that. Miss Pierce 'll never want to go back there, will she, now she's to Charterhouse?'

'No; Miss Pierce 'll never want to go back.'

There was a mockery in the way she repeated his words, for the mention of Sophia's name recalled her jealousy and dislike.

'*She'd* be willing to have it off her han's if she could get a poun' the more.'

'Ha, she'd be glad.'

Even in the midst of her emotion the girl laughed. He understood Sophia so exactly.

'Then do as I do want, Patty, dear,' he coaxed, close to her ear. '"Tis better so; an' it can't be for long. I'll make ee happy—I will.'

For a while she did not speak. In the cave there was no sound but her breathing, fast and short, as her longing struggled to overcome her fear.

'An' if I do marry ee, an'—an' then don't please ee after all, what could I do—cut off, like—maybe cut off from all?'

'You can't but please me, Patty, dear, I do love ee zo. 'Tis as if a man could be displeased wi' the apple of his eye.'

'If you should ever gie me only zo much as a look in anger, it 'ud break the heart o' me!' she cried.

'I never could—never in the world——'

'But I've a-zeed ee wild wi' rage only at a thought.'

''Tis all gone an' past,' he told her; 'tis all forgotten, if you do but do what I do ask.'

She drew a deep sigh.

'I can't help myself!' she burst out, carried away by her love for him, and clinging around his neck. 'I be boun' to do it. You've a-took me, zo that I've a-got no power nor wish o' my own—only to act as you do want.'

'Then I'll go to Wells to-morrow, an' get——'

She put her hand over his lips and stopped him.

'Don't ee zay another word now,' she begged.

She had promised. She hid her face away from his kisses, and at that time would talk no more. A glow of contentment and unmixed happiness came stealing into her bosom. She would marry him, and gain the great desire of her life. A little while, and her father must come round to understand and respect him; then everything would be well.

They took no count of passing time, but the air within the cave grew close and heavy to suffocation.

She roused herself with an effort.

'Look,' she cried, 'the can'les do burn low, an' 'tis zo hot in here as a ovem. Let's go out in the open, it must be later than we do think.'

He lighted her through the outer cave, and they went out and stood upon the ledge.

It was the last hour before sunrise. The early light of morning grey was lifting above the eastern range, and every bush and tree upon the line of the hill-top stood black against the first faint streak of coming day, but the pass beneath was black as night. Only on the cliff's head could the eye dimly make out the bolder crags and peaks, to lose them as they overlapped each other in the winding gorge.

'The day do grow fast, an' the reapers 'll be out betimes,' she said anxiously. 'I must go zo soon as ever I can zee to put my foot,'

'Then I'll make all ready to-day.'

'Ay, make all ready when you will,' she told him, speaking very slowly. 'My mind's a-made up. I won't run word.'

*(To be continued.)*

## *A Farmer's Year.*

*BEING HIS COMMONPLACE BOOK FOR 1898.*

### III.

The Science of Labour—Haymaking in South Africa—The Process of Bush Draining—The Patience of the Labourer—An Open Season—The Management of Woodlands—First Snowdrops—The Vitality of Docks—The Increase of Noxious Things—Rotten Swedes—Irish Cattle—Cruelty of Drovers—Death of the Ox—Intelligence of Oxen and Horses—Bad Hay—The Evil Sparrow—Moles and Earthworms—Dog Spooring Backwards—Cunning and Greediness of Sheep—Wheats at Bedingham—Roofed-in Yards—Dryness of the Season—Ewes and Lambs—Drilling Beans and Pease—Sale of Rams—Horse-hoeing Winter Beans for Shed Barley—Number of Hands Employed—January Saws.

MY remarks in the last number of this magazine upon the conditions under which the rural labourer lives have led me away from the subject of bush draining at Bedingham. I now return to the description of it. After the furrows are drawn all loose soil is neatly cleared from them with a shovel. Then the drainers begin their task. Generally they labour in pairs, agreeing to drain the field by piece-work on a payment of so much per rod. In this fashion, hardy, untiring men can earn a good deal more than the usual daily wage, although, draining being so laborious, they are in any case somewhat better paid for it than for other kinds of work. It is curious to watch them at their toil. They do not do anything hurriedly or ever seem to over-exert themselves. I have never seen a labourer employed about his work show any sign of physical distress, however hard it may chance to be; that is to say, his colour does not change or his breathing come quicker, nor does he turn faint, or weak about the knees. This is because he knows how to use his strength, how much, in short, he can expend daily without overdrawing the account.

Now, one unaccustomed to labour who has suddenly to undertake it will almost invariably make the mistake of working too hard, or too quickly, and exhausting himself. When I was a young fellow I owned a farm in South Africa, and as my partner and I were determined to show a good example to the Kaffirs

and wished to earn as much as we could, we laboured with our own hands, a thing which very few white men do out there if they are in a position to make any one else labour for them. Our work consisted principally in building sod walls, making bricks, and cutting hay with a machine.

The bricks were heavy enough, but it was the sod-wall building that exhausted me, as those awful sods never seemed to weigh less than half a hundredweight and there was an infinite supply of them. In fact, sod-walling knocked me up, and this I attribute to the fact that I worked too hard through want of training to the game. An ordinary labourer no stronger than I was would have placed sods all day without feeling more than comfortably tired at the end of it, but he would have placed them more slowly. Mine was the old mistake of *trop de zèle*.

Grass-cutting was the lightest work of these various pastoral occupations, although in Africa even grass-cutting has its risks. Our custom was to yoke four oxen on to the machine. This team was led by my partner, while I sat on the seat and managed the lever that lifts the knives, an anxious task, for the flat top of the mountain where we cut the hay was peppered over with large stones, which, if struck full by the knife-sheaths, might have smashed the machine—a valuable thing in those days—all to pieces. The stones, however, were not so bad as the ant-bear holes, which in some cases it was impossible to see, although very often they were several feet in diameter. Into these one of the iron wheels would fall with a bump, and then the problem was for the operator to prevent himself from being thrown off the seat on to the knives and hacked to pieces by them.

Once cut, the process of haymaking was simple. We never attempted to turn the grass, but left it to dry for a day in the hot sun. Then, having no carts, by the help of a horse-rake of our own manufacture we dragged the stuff into large cocks about the size of a Kaffir hut, and covered it with old waggon-cloths. In this way, as the grass was plentiful and we worked hard, on one occasion we made in about three weeks hay which we sold to the Commissariat for over 200*l.*; for I may explain that a war was in progress at the time, so that fodder was in considerable demand. This proved the most profitable bit of farming that I ever did, and I am always proud to remember that I once earned 240*l.*, or the half of it, by the labour of my own hands.

To return from Rooi Point to Bedingham. The drains having been cleared, the *modus operandi* is as follows: First one

man goes down the line digging out a spit of soil with his draining-spade, a narrow, heavy tool with a projecting bar upon which the foot is set. It takes three cuts of the spade, each of them driven home up to the projecting bar, to loosen the spit, which then, with a slow heave of the labourer's body and a quick movement of his arm, is thrown out to one side. After him comes his mate with a still narrower tool, who, in like fashion, cuts out and removes a deeper spit. This work is even harder than the first man's, since No. 2 is now working in *primaeval* clay, which at Bedingham is about the toughest stuff that I ever saw. If any one doubts it, let him get some upon his boots on a wet day and then try to get it off again. When a suitable length of drain has been done thus to the depth of a double spit, No. 2 man takes another instrument called a scoop, something like a trowel with the handle set more or less at right angles, and with it cleans out the bottom of the drain, into which it exactly fits, till it is quite neat and level. Then, having first removed with his fingers any little clods or other obstructions that may have fallen into it, he takes bushes from the heaps that are laid at intervals along the course of the drain, and packs a sufficient quantity of them into the cutting, thrusting them down to the narrow bottom of the V by means of a forked stick. These bushes, by the way, must not be mere hedge trimmings, but good stout stuff of five or six years growth, otherwise they will rot long before their time.

When the bushes have been thrust home, clods of clay are thrown loosely into the cutting to fill it up, and practically the drain is finished. These drains, by the way, are generally cut from about six to eight yards apart. They do not, for the most part, run direct into the receiving ditch, but into another drain drawn at right angles, which is called a 'lead,' and in the case of tile drains is furnished with larger pipes. From this lead 'eyes' open into the ditch wherever may be convenient.

To contemplate the spectacle of two men commencing to drain a great expanse of six or eight acres of stiff elay land on some dull and cheerless day in January, is to understand the splendid patience of mankind, that gift by which he has been able to lift himself from the level of the savage, or as some believe (though I am not one of them) from the moral and physical status of the gorilla. The task looks so vast in the miserable grey light; it seems almost impossible that two men should have the strength to dig out all those long lines of trenches, or at least that they should have the spirit to attempt it. Yet if you speak to them you will

find that they are not in the least depressed at the prospect, the only thing that troubles them is the fear lest frost or heavy snow should force them to pause in their monotonous labour. Go away and return in about ten weeks' time and, if the weather has kept open, you will probably find them engaged in finishing the last trench, with dozens of long rough furrows on the hither side of them, each of which means a completed drain.

The strange part of the thing is that such toilers betray not the least delight at the termination of their long labour. I have come to the conclusion that the agricultural labourer cares little for change or variety; that if he were paid what he considered a satisfactory wage he would be content to go on till he grew old digging drains in the same flat clay field through the same miserable January weather. Perhaps this is because so little change and variety come his way, poor fellow, except the change and variety of the face of Nature, of which, so far as one can discover, very often he takes but little account.

*January 15.*—The mild, windless weather continues, bringing with it a great deal of influenza and other sickness. It is, however, a splendid open time for farmers; thus, to-day, at a season of the year when very often everything is frost-bound, I have three ploughs going on the farm, while dead leaves are being carted from the shrubbery to the yards, and mud 'fied' from a pond dumped into heaps to be spread upon the back lawn. To-day also we have begun felling the undergrowth on the Bath Hills, most of which has not been cut for the last twelve or fourteen years. In properly managed woodlands the fell ought to be taken every seven years; indeed, in considerable woods it is divided into seven portions for this purpose, one portion being cut each year, when the stouter undergrowth is split for hurdles and the rest of less substance twisted into another form of hurdle which is known as a 'lift,' the remaining brushwood being tied for faggots.

In another part of Norfolk, where I was born, I remember my father taking a visitor who had been bred in London round the Big Wood, and elaborately explaining to her how one-seventh of it was cut down each year. 'Dear me!' she exclaimed, staring at some oaks in the fell which might have seen from three hundred to a hundred winters, 'I never knew before that trees grew as big as that in seven years.' The story reminds me of that of another lady whom I escorted to a field where we were drilling wheat. I showed her some of the grain, and, as she did not seem to recognise it, explained to her that it was the origin of the common

or domestic loaf. 'What,' she exclaimed incredulously, 'do you mean to tell me that bread is made out of those little hard things? I always thought that it came from that fine white stuff which grows in flowers!'<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed that of these various agricultural operations which are now in progress only one, the felling, can be carried on in frost, while even that must cease in snow or heavy rain. Well-to-do people often express a wish for a good old-fashioned winter, but they do not understand what hardship this means to the poor with whom fuel is scanty, and who have to earn their daily bread by labouring on the land. The poor, who do not skate or make snowballs, pray for an open winter, although, indeed, frost in moderation is a good thing for the farm, for it pulverises the earth and destroys noxious insects by the thousand.

To-day I saw the first snowdrops in bloom in the garden.

In walking over the eight-acre meadow on Baker's to look at the dykes which the man has now finished finging, I heard the partridges calling to each other on the neighbouring layer for the first time this year. I have not, however, seen any pairs as yet. This meadow is full of docks, the result of long neglect, and it will cost much trouble and expense to be rid of them. On our marshes, indeed, it is almost impossible to keep clear of docks, for as fast as you pull them out new ones establish themselves, sprung from seed brought down by the flood water. The vitality of the dock is something dreadful. (Query: Why are all evil things, even among herbs, so much more vigorous and easier of propagation than good things? He who could answer this question would know the riddle of the world!) To-day I picked up one on the wheatland of which the root stood several inches above the surface of the soil. On pulling it out of the earth I discovered that its head was buried deep in the ground. Yet, in that unnatural position, even thus early in the year it was growing vigorously, for from the crown of the plant were springing thick tufts of leaves, which on their journey to the surface had bent themselves into the shape of a hook. Another week or two and that dock would have been completely re-established, with the difference that what had been its head would now be its tail.<sup>2</sup>

Ever since I began to observe the ways of plants, I have been

<sup>1</sup> Evidently there was some confusion in the lady's mind between flour and flowers. Exactly what it was it is not now safe to ask her to explain. Indeed, she boldly repudiates the story.

<sup>2</sup> Where will a dock not live? On the shore of the island of Coll in the Hebrides I recently found one growing in a cranny of rock almost without soil, and exposed to the washing of sea spray and the full fury of the northern gales.

trying to discover what possible useful part a dock can perform in the economy of Nature, but hitherto without the slightest result. It is a great exhauster of the land, since, if left undisturbed, it will grow to the dimensions of a moderate sized carrot; nothing, so far as I can learn, will touch its foliage, and I think that even grubs and insects avoid its root, at least I never remember seeing one at all eaten. If any one knows what its real use may be I should be obliged if he would inform me.

By the way, taking into consideration the extraordinary reproductive powers of this and other noxious plants, how does it come about that when left to themselves they do not absolutely and entirely possess the land? According to all the rules of arithmetical progression it would be easy to prove that if you started one dock in the middle of a hundred-acre field, in so many months or years that field would be nothing but a tangled mass of docks. Yet this would not be the case; docks and other weeds there would be in plenty, also a proportion of wholesome grasses. What regulates the proportion and keeps the balance? How is it that one thing does not obtain the mastery? The same problem confronts us in the animal world. There is no apparent reason why any particular noxious pest or insect should not increase to such an extent as would make all other life impossible. Yet it never does. Even a bacillus knows where to stop, for the Black Death was satisfied with killing half the population.

On my way home I stopped to see the cart being filled from the lower clamp of swedes in the twelve-acre known as the Thwaite field. For some reason or other these swedes have rotted considerably. I can only suppose that the mild weather has caused them to ferment, and, indeed, in such a season as we have had, they would have kept just as well, or better, not earthed up at all, or left quite open at the top to allow the heat to escape. Perhaps, if the theory advanced by my friend at the audit is correct, it applies to swedes as well as to beet, and these were 'haled' too dry. Swedes grown with artificial manure are said to rot more readily than others, but these in question were treated with farmyard muck. Curiously enough there are many more rotten bulbs in the middle than at either end of the hale.

*January 19.*—A day of woe and desolation! My best ox is dead. When, somewhat unexpectedly, I took on Baker's Farm last November, not having sufficient cattle to stock it I was obliged to buy ten head on Norwich market, which I did at a price of thirteen pounds a-piece. I have never done this before,

and, unless it is absolutely necessary, I never mean to do it again, for I look upon these market cattle with great distrust. For the most part they come from Ireland, and then are hawked about from market to market until the owner gets what he considers an advantageous offer. Thus they might begin at Lynn and go to Dereham, and thence to Norwich, on each occasion standing for a whole day in the market-place. Consequently, when they leave the pens the brutes are ravenous and pick up and swallow any rubbish that they can find, thus laying the foundation of internal disorders; also often enough, although they may not show the result of it till afterwards, they have been knocked about upon board ship, or in the pens, or on the road by brutal drovers.

The cruelty which this class of men will sometimes show to animals in their charge is almost incredible, especially if they happen to have had a glass too much beer and the beasts are obstinate or troublesome. A year or so back, when I was waiting at Fornsett Station for a train on market day, I saw two drovers driving pigs up an inclined plank into a truck. One of these pigs refused to go up the plank and ran away once or twice, whereupon the men beat it about the head with their heavy sticks till it was three parts stunned and the blood came from its ears and nostrils. Fortunately I had a minute or two to spare before the train came in, and was able to employ it in a rapid visit to the police station. The men were afterwards prosecuted for cruelty to animals, but I do not know with what result, as I was away from home at the time.

A few days after their arrival here one or two of these purchased oxen, which were fine-grown but rather poor Irish beasts, showed signs of not being very well. Hood and I were afraid lest they might be about to develop an infectious disease, for that risk he who buys cattle on the market must take also. They recovered, however, and went on fairly well until to-day. Then, as Hood was on his way to visit them, he met the boy whose business it is to feed the beasts at Baker's, running to seek him in great fright with the news that one of the oxen (of course the biggest and best) was 'blown.' Blown he was sure enough, for there he lay on his back, swollen to almost twice his size, and his legs feebly kicking in the air. He must have been in this condition for some time, perhaps the best part of an hour, and, had the case been reported at once, could probably have been cured by means of a drink such as all cattle-owners keep ready. But lads are not so observant as they might be, and so it came about that the youth

in charge never noticed his condition until too late. I think that he will be more careful in future. Blowing, or 'hoven,' it may be explained for the benefit of the uninitiated, results from the gluttony of cattle, who sometimes fill themselves so full with food that in the fermentation which ensues, there is no room for the gases to escape. Then the pressure seems to close the pipes, and they fall upon their backs, where they lie kicking violently until the gases, pushing upon the heart, stop it, and the interesting sufferer expires, like one of the early English kings, from 'a surfeit of good cheer.'

Finding that the beast was dying, Hood, having nothing at hand with which to despatch him, drove as hard as he could to Bungay and brought back the butcher. Then, not without difficulty, the dead animal was hauled on to a cart and taken to the town to be opened. It was curious to watch the demeanour of the other oxen in the yard while these melancholy scenes were in progress. They sniffed at the carcass, whisked their tails, and gambolled awkwardly as though they were experiencing some gentle and pleasing excitement. I have often heard it said that cattle are terrified at the smell of blood, but in this case I could not see a sign of fear about them, though undoubtedly they understood that something unusual was going on.

It would be interesting if any one could discover what is the exact measure of an ox's intelligence. Here, where they are confined in yards, fattening, it would seem to be almost entirely limited to matters connected with the food which they gorge so persistently. But that oxen are not altogether fools will be evident to any one who, like myself, has had considerable experience of them in Southern Africa, where they are the draught-animals of the land. Notably they are very clever in finding their way across country to the place where they were bred, or where they have lived a long while, sometimes for a distance of hundreds of miles, though I very much doubt whether, in the case of oxen, this is not instinct rather than intelligence.

That in the case of horses it is intelligence I think I can prove by the following story: When I lived in Africa I had a horse called Moresco, a very remarkable beast, of great speed, endurance, and sure-footedness. This creature was so clever that I have known him resort to extraordinary artifices to obtain food, such as lying down and wriggling himself upon his side underneath a waggon till he could reach the sack where the mealies were kept and gnaw a hole in it with his teeth. Then, still lying on his

side, he devoured most of the contents. Also once he broke open a door to get at the forage stored behind it. When I was travelling with him on circuit through New Scotland, the great horse-breeding district of the Transvaal, Moresco one night broke the *riem* with which he was tied to the waggon and made off after a troop of mares. We searched for him without avail, and at length, as it was absolutely necessary that we should open Court in a certain town on a fixed day, we were obliged to abandon him. I think it was three mornings afterwards that I got out of the waggon at daylight to find Moresco standing untied among the other horses. As roads in South Africa in those days were nothing but tracks wandering hither and thither across the veldt, of which we had crossed many during the time that he was lost, I can only suppose that the horse, when he was tired of the company of the mares, had deliberately taken up our spoor and followed it till he found us.

A year or two afterwards Moresco was stolen from Newcastle, in Natal, where I was then living, and for six months we mourned him as lost beyond redemption. One day, however, the poor creature, consisting of nothing but skin and bones, with a dreadful hole almost through his withers produced by neglected sore back, was found wandering about upon the farm. Subsequent inquiries went to show that the man who stole Moresco had ridden him into the Cape Colony, nearly a thousand miles away, and that thence he had escaped and found a path back to his home.

The end of this horse, the most remarkable that I ever knew, was so pathetic that I will tell it. He was what is called a salted horse, that is to say, he had survived the horse-sickness, and it was supposed, therefore, that he could not catch it again. This, however, proved to be an error; indeed, my experience goes to show that very few horses are so thoroughly salted that they will not re-develop the sickness, generally in a different form, under conditions favourable to that disease. Moresco's state when he escaped from the thief in the Cape Colony was such that had he been any other animal I should have shot him. As an old favourite and companion he was kept and nursed, however, in the hope that he might ultimately recover. But 1881, the year of the Boer war, was a dreadful season for sickness; I remember that we lost two hundred pounds' worth of horses by it in a single week. At last the plague seized upon poor old Moresco also. We did what we could for him, which was little enough, for, though animals occasionally recover, there is no real remedy for horse-sickness, and then were obliged to leave him to take his chance.

At the back of my house at Rooi Point stood a wall of loose stones nearly four foot high, with a gate in it which was shut in the evening. About midnight we were awakened by the sound of a clumsy knocking upon the back door. On investigating the cause it was found that poor Moresco, feeling himself dying, had contrived to climb the wall and was seeking our assistance and calling attention to his state by the only means in his power, namely, by knocking at the door. Nothing could be done for him, so he was driven through the gate, and in the morning we found him dead not far away.

By way of illustration of this story I may add that I remember, when I lived in Pretoria, another instance of a horse belonging to an acquaintance, which, on feeling itself mortally stricken with sickness, came and pawed at the door of the house. Also, the animal of which I have spoken, Moresco, was an exception among his kind—they say that every man owns one perfect beast in his life, and Moresco was mine. It is by no means wise, however, always to trust to the instinct of horses, and especially to their supposed faculty of finding their way home upon a dark night. Once I did this near Maritzburg, in Natal, with the result that presently I found myself, with the horse, at the bottom of a stone-pit!

To return to the case of the oxen. Although in some particulars they show undoubted intelligence, in many ways they are great fools. Thus they seem to have no knowledge of what is or is not good for them to eat. In Natal there grows a herb called 'tulip,' which is almost certain death to cattle, a fact with which they must have been acquainted for generations. Yet they seem to eat it greedily whenever they get the chance. Once I lost about twenty valuable trek-oxen from this cause alone. This, and the tale of the horse-sickness, to say nothing of the recent record of rinderpest, will show the reader that farming in Africa is not without its risks. Indeed, I know no country where the waste of animal life is so tremendous, although doubtless as the land becomes enclosed and proper buildings and winter food are provided, it will greatly lessen.

Returning to the home-farm after watching the funeral procession of the departed ox, I found the pork-butcher, who had arrived there to execute a pig. He informed me that he had cured blown cattle by giving them salt and water, and drawing a sack over their heads, making it fast round their necks. The salt and water might do something, but I confess I do not understand the sack. Another local recipe is to shut them up in a loose-box,

exclude all air and heap sacks upon them. My own opinion is that animals which recover under this treatment would not have died in any case. I believe also that the best preventive against 'blowing' is to have the root they feed on pulped and mixed with the chaff twelve hours before it is given to the cattle. This excellent plan allows fermentation to take place and the gases to escape before the food reaches the stomach of the ox. It is, however, very difficult to persuade farmers and bailiffs to adopt it, partly because they are prejudiced about the matter, and partly because it requires a little more thought and trouble, and a proper place is necessary where the pulped root can be kept safe and clean until it is time to use it.

*January 20.*—To-day is extraordinarily mild for the time of year, and all the birds are singing with a full voice as though spring were already come. The garden, too, shows many signs of life, and one crocus has just opened its gold cup upon the north slope of the lawn bank. Three ploughs are going on the eight-acre on Baker's Farm, No. 41, turning back the soil which was ploughed for barley a few weeks ago. This is a stiffish bit of land, and, should the weather hold fairly dry, a second ploughing will no doubt do it a great deal of good. Should it chance to come on wet, however, it will probably work it harm, as the freshly turned soil will then run together into a kind of cake. Still, since the season holds so dry, it seems worth while to take the risk.

This afternoon I saw the butcher who killed the blown ox. He told me it is so bruised from long struggling on its back after it went down that the meat is of little value. He added that he dared not send it to London for fear lest we should all get into trouble. I begged him on no account to do anything of the sort, as I do not wish to appear before a metropolitan magistrate in the character of a vendor of doubtful meat. He assured me that he will not, but as a matter of curiosity I should like to know what becomes of this class of beef. So far as I can gather it is consumed on board the herring-smacks; smacksmen, it would seem, not being dainty feeders.

*January 23.*—To-day, Sunday, is one of the most beautiful days imaginable, very mild, with a fresh west wind and bright sunshine. I walked over Baker's Farm and found the wheat looking wonderfully well, while the grass seems to be growing visibly. The sunset to-night was especially lovely—a large glowing ball of fire without a cloud to dim it.

On Friday, the day after my last entry, we had more bad

luck, for another of the bullocks at Baker's was taken sick; he did not seem to be blown, but stood by himself, his back humped, his eye dull and his head hanging. The farrier says he is suffering from obstruction in his third stomach—it was news to me that oxen are endowed with *three* of these useful organs. If the veterinary says so I suppose that he is right, but so far as I can judge the animal might just as well be suffering from anything else. Had we been in Africa I should say that he had contracted red-water, of which he has certainly many of the symptoms.

Hood is very indignant that another of this Irish lot should have gone wrong, and attributes it to the hay that we took over by valuation on Baker's, which undoubtedly is sticklike and mouldy, whereof he speaks in terms more forcible than polite. When the ox dies, as I presume he will sooner or later, though he was better yesterday, we shall find out whether it was to his third stomach or to his liver, or to something else, that his decease is due. Having satisfied myself that under no circumstances can these brutes return a halfpenny of profit, I await the issue in gloomy calm.

*January 25.*—The lambs are beginning to come faster; yesterday I had two doubles. As I returned from looking at them I saw the first pair of partridges which I have noticed this year; also I observed that the sparrows are beginning to build in the banksia rose on the south side of the house. These sparrows are a perfect pest to us, and I know not how to keep them under. In some parts of the farm they move about in flocks a hundred strong. The damage that they do is very great, whereas I have been unable to discover in them a single redeeming virtue. They take coombs of corn out of some of the fields of wheat, spoiling even more than they devour, as they seem to like to pick the ears to pieces for mischief's sake. Also they are very destructive to young beet, especially if the crop has been planted in a small field, as they issue from the hedges on every side and pick the tender leaves to bits with their strong bills. As a climax to their crimes they attack the swallows and martins, driving them away and taking possession of their nests. Indeed, sometimes they kill them, for I have picked up the corpses of the poor things with a hole pecked through their skulls.

In former times Sparrow Clubs used to exist in these parts, under the provisions of which the farmers of a district banded themselves together to destroy the common enemy in any way possible, but with the decline of agriculture the clubs have vanished. Now we are obliged to rely upon the destructive in-

instincts of youth, paying so much a score to boys for sparrows' eggs or young sparrows. Occasionally also in hard weather one can kill a good many by laying a trail of corn, and when the sparrows are feeding in flocks, firing down it with a charge of dust-shot. But the worst of this plan is that the shooter is very apt to massacre harmless birds, such as chaffinches and robins, which come down to pick up any crumbs that may fall from the sparrows' table and are involved in their doom. Of late patent basket sparrow-traps have been largely advertised, and with them testimonials from gentlemen who say they have caught great numbers by their means. I purchased one of these wicker traps for five shillings, but the result showed that I might as well have kept my money in my pocket, as not one single sparrow have I been able to catch with it. I suppose that the race must be more artful about here than in the neighbourhood of the gentlemen who give the testimonials. According to the directions, grain or crumbs should be sprinkled at the bottom of the trap, whereon the birds will go down the little hole in the middle and find themselves unable to get out again. My experience of the working of the thing has been that, whereas they will use the trap as a perch gladly enough, not even the youngest and most inexperienced sparrow evinces the faintest intention of going down the hole to investigate its inside and devour the dainties spread to entice it.

The only really effectual way of keeping these birds under is by means of poisoned wheat, but this, unless spread with great care in places frequented by sparrows alone, such as eaves and water-troughings, is highly dangerous to all life. Also the sale of it is illegal; indeed, we have convicted men for this offence before my own Bench. Still, farmers use it a good deal under the rose, and, I am sorry to say, not for sparrows only, but for pigeons and rooks also, with the result that a great deal of game and many harmless birds are poisoned. On the whole, taking one farm with another, the bold, assertive, conquering sparrow pursues his career of evil almost unchecked, producing as many young sparrows as it pleases him to bring up. Indeed, I do not understand how it comes about that we are not entirely eaten up with these mischievous birds, except for the reason, as I have said on a previous page, that there is some mysterious power which preserves a balance amongst all things that live and grow.

I observed also, in the course of my walk, that the moles seem to be very numerous this year, possibly on account of the mildness

of the season, for some of the meadows, and especially the lands at the foot of the Bath Hills, are dotted all over with the brown heaps of soil thrown up by them. Farmers dislike moles, and allege much evil against them; but I believe that they do more good than harm, at least on pastures, by bringing up so many tons of quite fresh earth from the subsoil, which, when harrowed and brushed, gives the grasses a dressing of new mould which must benefit them much. Indeed, I doubt whether some pastures that are frequently mown and never manured would keep their fertility half as well as they do were it not for the action of moles and earth-worms. In his remarkable book upon earth-worms Darwin has shown how great is the work they do upon the surface of the world, and I believe that one part of it is to promote its fertility.

On coming into the house after walking about the garden, the door shut behind me with a bang. As it chanced, I wished to go out again for some reason, and on reaching the steps saw a curious sight. A little rough terrier dog, called Di, hearing the door bang—usually a signal to her that I am starting on my rounds—had run to seek me from some hole or corner where she was engaged in her hourly occupation of hunting a quite uncatchable rat. Not being able to see me, for I had gone into the house, not come out of it—a solution of the mystery that did not occur to her—she set to work to trace my spoor, following every loop and turn that I had made as I wandered about the garden, and finally striking out across the tennis-court and over the lawn beyond, which I had crossed on my homeward way. The curious thing was, not her following my spoor, which I have often seen her do before, but the persistence and cleverness with which she followed it *backwards*. What I should like to know—and perhaps some reader of these papers can inform me on the matter—is whether there is anything about the scent left by man or beast to enable a dog or other creature on the spoor to tell which way it runs. This instance of Di would seem to show that there is none; but, after all, it is only one example, and she may be an undiscerning little dog. Also, it must be remembered that her mind was full of the preconceived idea that I had gone out of the house, not returned into it.

This morning I met Hood as he was driving the unlambd ewes from the little All Hallows farm meadow, where they are now confined at night, to the hay-stubble on Baker's, which we are folding before sowing oats on it. I stood talking with him for a

minute or two, while the sheep went through the gateway on to the main road. When we followed, presently, not one of them was to be seen, till an ominous sound of munching caused me to look over a neighbouring fence. There were the ewes, the whole lot of them, in the well-kept garden of one of my men—at least it had been a garden, but that five minutes had sufficed to reduce it to a trodden wilderness with cabbage-stalks sticking up here and there. I shouted aloud to Hood, whereupon the ewes, of their own accord, and without waiting to be driven, stopped gobbling the remains of the cabbages and ran to a hole, which they must have made in the thick fence with considerable effort and difficulty while we were talking, and through it, one by one, back into the road. This spontaneous retreat seems to prove that they knew perfectly well that they were doing what they should not. Indeed, I think that sheep are nothing like so foolish as they are supposed to be, though nearly all their intelligence seems to concentrate itself upon matters connected with their food, for of the ovine race it may be said with truth, 'their god is their belly.' It is curious to notice how seldom they stop eating while there is anything that excites their appetite, and how, after having fed heavily for hours in one place, on the gate being opened, they will rush to another in the hope of finding more food there. Thus this very morning, as soon as they had escaped from the ruined garden, they set off down the road, round the proper turn, to the gate of the field where they are penned in the daytime, about a quarter of a mile away. Here, heavy as they are in lamb, they broke into a full gallop in their eagerness to reach the turnips heaped in the field and steal some before the shepherd arrived to put them in the pen.

This afternoon I went to Bedingham, and found the wheats looking wonderfully green and thick, so much so that in the case of two of the pieces, Nos. 6 and 8 on the plan, they will, I think, have to be thinned by harrowing. The crops on these fields last year were respectively beans and pease, and doubtless we owe this fine prospect to the nitrogen collected from the atmosphere by these leguminous plants. The remaining piece of wheat, No. 9, is not nearly so strong, I suppose because it is grown on flag-land, this field having been a clover layer last year, off which a cut of hay was taken, followed, as the autumn was suitable to its ripening, by a crop of seed.

I found Moore, who is in local charge of this farm, baulking or earthing up for root. He said, and I agreed with him, that

the land had never been known to work so well at this time of year since we had to do with it, the long-continued drought having made it friable and tender, whereas in other Januaries often it is hard with frost or so stiff with wet that, if an attempt is made to stir it, it comes up in lumps as large as horses' heads.

The open season has been very fortunate for me upon this farm, as, owing to the taking over of Baker's, I was obliged to draw a horse from Bedingham, leaving two only, and one of these an old mare in foal. Therefore, had not the weather remained so clement that work could be attended to as it pressed, week in, week out, I might have been forced to buy another horse, which I do not wish to do, as I have several young animals coming on. But, however dry the season, water is never far off in these stiff clays. Thus I could see it standing at the bottom of the trenches being cut by the drainers on field No. 18, and especially wherever they chanced to have crossed the line of an old drain and bled it. By the way, it is getting difficult to find enough bushes with which to finish this draining, almost all the suitable stuff having been used. There was plenty of it when I took over this farm, but since then the fences have gone underground.

To-day I have been making a plan for roofing in the horse and cattle yard at Bedingham with galvanised iron supported by oak posts. If possible, and if it is not too costly, I am anxious to deal thus with all my open yards, as I believe that the cost of closing them in, which, if one can provide the necessary timber, is not so very great, will be repaid in three years by the manure saved and the increase in its fertilising value. I have already three such sheds erected over yards, and there is no comparison in the stuff which comes from them and that from the open yard, which is frequently little better than dirty, rain-washed straw. Another thing is that roofed-in yards mean a great saving in the amount of litter used, and consequently less carting both in and out. I doubt—but this is, of course, only conjecture, as it is difficult to arrive at the exact quantities—whether the beasts in a closed-in yard will make away with much more than half the amount of straw necessary to the wellbeing of an equal number of animals in an open yard during a wet season. Lastly, the cattle do far better under shelter.

*January 28.*—The day before yesterday I rode to Kessingland, fifteen miles away, on a bicycle. On the further side of Beccles I stopped to talk with an old labourer who was hedge-trimming. He told me that he was seventy years of age, and had

worked in that neighbourhood all his life, but that never yet had he known such a season for the time of year, or the water in dykes, ponds, and springs to be so low. Yesterday was mild and dry, and all my three ploughs were at work 'thwarting'—that is cross ploughing—root-land on the Nunnery Farm.

A good many more lambs have arrived, and, with their mothers, are established in comfortable little hurdle-made pens in the old barn at All Hallows. The worst of this plan is that the lambs get through the hurdles and become inextricably mixed in their vain attempts to find their own mothers. It is curious to notice the behaviour of the ewes when the wrong lamb comes to them. First they sniff at it, for to all appearance they are guided in this matter by the sense of smell alone; then, if the result is unsatisfactory, they simply put down their heads and with a vicious butt knock the poor little creature into space. Evidently they have no affection for lambs as a class; it is only their individual offspring that claims their sympathy. Yesterday we had to try one old ewe with about a dozen different lambs, each of which she knocked over in the most cold-blooded fashion. A cautious sniff at the thirteenth satisfied her that at length her missing infant had returned, whereon she baa-ed contentedly, and with a smile of maternal pride allowed it to partake of refreshment.

I noticed for the first time the brilliant but tiny scarlet blooms open upon the filbert bushes; by the number of them it should be a good nut-year. My drill was hired out to a neighbour to put in his spring beans. The man in charge of it told me that they went in very well.

To-day I have begun drilling my own spring beans and pease on the eight acres on Baker's, No. 43. This field has had a good coat of the manure which I took over by valuation, supplemented, as there was not enough available, by a few loads of Bungay compost, road scrapings, &c., in the far corner. Like the rest of the farm, it is somewhat foul, and will, I fancy, give plenty of work to the hoe, for the plough and harrows turn up docks like carrots, to say nothing of countless minor weeds. The tilth, however, is very good, and the beans, with as much of the pease as we could sow to-day, went in beautifully, not a single seed being visible after the drill had dropped them, for the soil ran in behind it almost like dry sand. We only used six 'coulters' on the drill, a seven-foot instrument, in planting beans, as against twelve or thirteen for pease, which are set much closer. Coulters, I may

explain, in case there should be any who do not know them, are the shares connected with the body of the machine, whence the seed is lifted and dropped by wheels set with cups through a number of flexible funnels fitting one into the other. Down these funnels the seed trickles at a given rate, to fall grain by grain into the trench cut by the coulter. In front of the drill, a rig or two a head of it, goes a set of iron harrows dragged by two horses, tearing down the rough surface of the plough and breaking the clods into mould. Next comes the drill itself, dragged by three horses with two men in charge of it. It is followed by the wood harrow, with a pair of horses, which fills in the furrows made by the coulters of the drill, burying the seed in the mould and completing the process.

It is still early to drill spring beans and pease, but I think it wise to get them in while the soil is in such good order, as in our uncertain climate it is impossible to say what kind of weather awaits us.

Some more lambs were born to-day, and my two Southdown rams were sold at Bungay market, the large one for forty shillings and the smaller for twenty-five. I was sorry to part with the big ram, as he is a good-looking pedigree animal, but these creatures are a nuisance to keep through the summer; they cannot be allowed to run with the ewes, as they would knock about and perhaps kill the lambs, and if penned up they are apt to develop foot-rot. Of course, in large flocks, where there are proper provisions for keeping rams by themselves, it is another matter, but in the case of a little lot of sheep like mine it is best to get rid of them, and buy or hire others when they are wanted.

*January 29.*—This morning we finished drilling the pease on Baker's, No. 43, and also drilled four acres of pease on All Hallows, No. 37, the ten-acre which was under barley last year and is now divided into six acres of layer and four of pease. Like those sown on the other piece, they went in very well. In drilling with a number of coulters it is very necessary to watch that nearest to the wheel, since the earth lifted by the wheel in its revolutions is apt to fall into the funnel and choke the lower exit. This happened to-day, with the result that the centre funnels filled with pease which could not escape, and necessitated going down the line cut by the coulter and sowing by hand the seed that had missed.

In the afternoon I went to Bedingham, where I found the men getting on very well with the draining of field No. 18. Bushes by now, however, have become scarce indeed, and as there

is no fence left which we can cut, we have been obliged to fall back on the stout growth springing from the crowns of pollards. This afternoon I found Moore splitting back the baulks on one of the fields which he had earthed up for root. Yesterday he horse-hoed the five acres of winter beans, No. 14. I should think that it is almost the first time within the memory of living man that beans have been horse-hoed at Bedingham on January 29. The immediate object of the operation was to get rid of some of the barley which dropped from last year's crop before it was carried. Two years ago we learnt a lesson in this matter of barley here at Ditchingham on the brick-kiln field, No. 22. The season before had been very dry, causing the grain to shed in quantity, with the result that in the following spring it came up thick among the beans. For some reason or other we were unable to horse-hoe it sufficiently early. The end of it was that in order to prevent the beans from being smothered we were obliged to pull the barley by hand, for the hoe could not deal with it—a tedious and a costly process.

I have seldom seen beans looking better than those on this piece at Bedingham.

*January 31.*—Yesterday, Sunday, it rained sharply in the morning but cleared in the afternoon, when a gale came up from the S.W.; at night also there were flaws of rain. The large ox, which was supposed to have recovered from the derangement of its third stomach, is sick again. Now it grinds its teeth and is foaming at the mouth as though it had hydrophobia. My own opinion is that none of them know what is the matter with it.

I find that I am now employing fifteen hands in all on the two farms, not reckoning Mrs. Hood, who makes the butter, or Mrs. Moore, who attends to the fowls at Bedingham. This allows for nine men and one boy on the home farms, with four men and one boy at Bedingham. One of these, however, is an extra man employed by piece-work on the draining.

To-day, the last of the month, is lovely and spring-like, with a drying north-west wind. This morning we drilled three acres of sheep's-feed on No. 24. This field has stood for two years as layer, and as it is light land, before the flag was broken up we gave it a dressing of heavy clay from the pit in this garden which was enlarged last autumn. Also, it has been more or less manured with road and yard scrapings, and anything else that we could find to put upon it. The rain of yesterday has not done much more than damp this light land, so the seed went in very well. We

were using fifteen coulter on the drill and one coomb, that is four bushels of seed to the acre.

It looked a curious mixture as it lay in the boxes or hoppers of the drill, oats for the most part mingled with wheat, tares, and a few beans, but doubtless the sheep will appreciate it in due course.

He who would fill his pouch with groats  
In Januair must sow his oats,

runs the old saw—by the way, the word ‘groats’ shows that it must be a very old one—but these are the only oats that I have drilled as yet. To-morrow, however, if it is fine, we are sending five horses to Bedingham to drill oats, pease, and barley. Never before have we drilled barley so early, and both Hood and I (especially Hood) are rather doubtful of the wisdom of so doing on heavy land. The fact is that the fine, indeed the extraordinary weather we have had this month has made us a little ‘winter-proud,’ as they say of wheat that has grown too vigorously during the dead months of the year, and it is quite possible that before the sweet surprises of the English spring are done with, our high hopes, like the wheat, may meet with an unexpected check. Still, I am for going straight ahead, as though the spring were, in truth, already with us, and sowing barley, or anything else if the land is fit to receive it.

And so good-bye to January. Here are one or two saws collected from various sources for those who care for proverbial wisdom :

If January has never a drop,  
The barn will need an oaken prop;

which certainly is comforting news to the farmer in this year of grace. Lest he be too elated, however, I append another :

In January if the sun appear,  
March and April pay full dear.

Also a third of still more evil import:

If grass do grow in Januair or Februair,  
It will grow the worse for it all the year.

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

(To be continued.)

## *A Dorsetshire Pastoral.*

FARMER JOYCE walked meditatively up the steep, deeply rutted lane which led to the field wherein his sheep were penned. He was a tall, bluff, burly old man, carrying himself erect in spite of his seventy years, and capable still of performing a hard day's work with the best of his juniors. On one of his broad shoulders now rested a pitchfork supporting a goodly truss of hay; in the other hand he carried a shepherd's crook. A quaint, picturesque, pastoral figure was this, clad in the antiquated smock frock, now so seldom to be seen, but which Farmer Joyce wore summer and winter alike; his nether limbs were encased in corduroys and stout leather leggings, and his great nailed boots left impressions, gigantic and far apart, on the muddy soil. The cutting wind frolicked with his iron-grey beard and hair, and intensified the ruddy hue of his broad, honest face. The years which had passed over that kindly face had left wonderfully few traces, except for the dust with which they had powdered the once coal-black hair and beard. There were no furrows in the brow, no pinched lines about the mouth; the eyes looked forth from under their whitened lashes with the large contemplative gaze of the man accustomed to pass his life between earth and sky, to sweep wide horizons, to take note, with one comprehensive glance, of the changes of the weather, of the coming of the seasons as indicated by sun and clouds, by bloom or decay advancing over vast tracts of country. Farmer Joyce had a mind above petty cares; the small home worries and anxieties he left, as he frequently announced, his missus to see to; for himself he kept his soul untroubled, taking good and evil fortune alike philosophically. Yet to-day his face wore a puzzled, not to say perturbed, expression, and, as he neared the top of the hill, he imperceptibly slackened his long, swinging strides.

At the turn of the road, through the black irregular line of wintry hedgerow, came glimpses of yellow, standing out vividly

against the sombre background of dull green and grey; these were the hurdles carefully padded with straw which penned in the lambing ewes. From the spot where Farmer Joyce stood, pausing a moment hesitatingly before continuing the ascent, a small tarred shepherd's hut reared itself between him and the sky, and presently the figure of a man appeared slowly moving round it.

'There he be,' murmured the farmer to himself, and went on more rapidly.

The figure advanced to meet him, and was standing by the small wicket gate leading to the field by the time the other reached it.

An old man, much older, apparently, than his master, the outlines of his bent shoulders sharply defined under the soiled linen jacket; his ragged hair and whiskers white, his very face grey and rugged, ploughed into deep furrows by time and hardship; the eyes looking straight before them with a dull non-expectant gaze; the horny old hand, which rested on the gate, gnarled and knotted, and extraordinarily thin.

'Good-day to you, shepherd. How's the rheumatics?'

'Good-day, farmer; good-day. Rheumatics is bad, thank ye.'

'Ah,' said Joyce, 'I fear ye're falterin', shepherd, I do, trewly.'

Shepherd Robbins made no response; he stood aside to let his master pass into the enclosure. Then the two paced together from pen to pen, the farmer's usually dreamy eye alert enough now, and quick to take note of anything amiss. Once or twice he found fault, and once or twice he gave directions; Robbins receiving commands and admonitions alike in stolid silence. With stiff and feeble movements he helped the farmer to set before the ewes the provender which he had brought, and stood watching them with him while they precipitated themselves upon it.

'What a din they do make—a body can scarce hear his own voice,' cried Joyce, turning away at last.

'Tis their natur' like, master,' replied the shepherd, hobbling after him. 'There's little need of a-hearin' one's own voice with ewes and lambs about. It do take a man all his time to see to 'em.'

'Ah,' agreed the farmer, stopping short suddenly and looking at him, 'it do, shepherd; it do. 'Tis more nor many a man can do. 'Tis more nor you can do at your time of life, shepherd, I'd 'low.'

'I do do it,' returned Robbins stolidly.

'Ah,' pursued the farmer, following out his own train of thought, as though he had not heard him, 'we be near lambin'

time now, and 'tis puzzlin' to know how ye're a-goin' to manage it. It do puzzle me, I know. Ye're falterin', man, I tell 'ee.'

Robbins gazed vacantly at his master, rubbing his gnarled hands together slowly.

'My missus was a-sayin' it to me only last night,' pursued the other. 'She do think——'

But here some gleam of intelligence seemed to filter into Robbins's mind.

'Missus do think I'm past work,' he said. 'That's what she do do. Missus never could abear me.'

'Now then, come,' cried the farmer, with a kind of mild roar of exasperation. 'The missus is a good missus to 'ee, Robbins. She be but anxious for to help 'ee.'

'She's onreasonable,' grumbled the shepherd; 'onreasonable, that's what she be. She do look for too much, and expect too much. When Daisy calved she was vexed at its bein' a bull calf. "Well, missus," I says, "I can't help it if it do be a bull. Things falls out so," I says, "as we can't always have our own way. There must be he's as well as she's in this world." An' she did rate me for the sayin', an' she do keep a grudge agin me ever since.'

'Nay, now,' said Farmer Joyce, sinking his voice but still speaking with the air of mild expostulation which had characterised his former remarks. 'She don't bear 'ee no grudge, man, not she. She be all for doin' 'ee a good turn, I tell 'ee. Says she to me last night, "We must gi' shepherd help," she says, "else he'll ne'er get through wi' the lambin' this year. He deserves consideration," she says. "He's worked for 'ee faithful all his life. We mus'n't let un drop in 'arness," says she. Them be her very words, shepherd.'

Robbins continued to rub his hands, but without any appearance of gratification. Mr. Joyce coughed, stuck his pitchfork in the ground, but almost immediately took it out again. He seemed to find some difficulty in proceeding.

'Them was her very words,' he resumed, however, presently. '"He mus'n't be allowed to drop in 'arness. We shall be four shillin' a week out o' pocket, but Shepherd Robbins do deserve it," she says.'

The farmer paused again. It takes some little time for a new idea to penetrate into the inner consciousness of a Dorsetshire rustic; but after a few moments Robbins seemed to grasp this one, and a gleam came into his faded eyes.

'Four shillin' a week,' he repeated, 'what kind o' chap be you a-goin' to get for that money, master? Why, the lads 'ud scarce frighten the crows for that.'

The farmer coughed again and gently prodded the ground with his pitchfork, watching the operation with apparently intent interest for a moment or two. Then he slowly raised his eyes.

'He'll be a gettin' eight shillin' a week, shepherd. Ye see, 'tis this way. We be a-payin' you twelve shillin' now, we be.'

Robbins nodded. He had ceased to rub his hands, but stood with the palms still tightly pressed together.

'Well, ye see, we didn't a-grudge it ye. Ye was wuth it to us, shepherd—while ye was strong an' hearty ye was wuth it to us,' he repeated handsomely. 'But now, ye bain't fit for much, and that's the trewth; 'tis no fault o' yourn, but ye bain't. We lost a terrible lot o' lambs last year. Ye be too stiff in your joints to get about quick, an' ye can't get through your work. It comes hard on we, ye see, to be payin' out good money an' not gettin' the money value—an' it comes hard on you, too, now ye be a-gettin' into years, shepherd, to be strivin' an' contrivin' like, an' bibberin' in the frostiss an' snow stuff, an' standin' out o' nights when the rheumatics is bad. 'Tis cruel hard for ye, shepherd.'

'Ay, sure,' agreed Robbins, more readily than usual. He did not in the least see the drift of the farmer's argument, but felt that the last proposition was indubitably true.

'So ye see 'tis this way, I lose four shillin' a week by hirin' a chap to help 'ee, and you lose four shillin' a week. I'll pay him eight shillin', an' I'll pay you eight shillin', an' ye'll divide the work between ye. That's it, do ye see,' said Farmer Joyce confidentially; 'divide the work an' divide the wage.'

Robbins stared at him, vacantly at first, then with a growing sense of indignation as he began dimly to understand the nature of the proposal.

'I don't agree, master,' he said, after a moment's pause. 'Nay, that I don't. I never axed no help, an' I'm not a-goin' to divide no wage. Twelve shillin' a week is what I did agree for, an' I've a had it for twenty year an' more. I can't do with no less now nor I did then.'

'Well, but,' argued the farmer, 'tis this way, ye see, I can't afford to be at a loss. I've a-stood it as long as I could, shepherd, but I can't nowadays let things go wrong this season same as last; I can't trewly. Ye mustn't be onreasonable. Why, look 'ee—d' ye know any man o' your years in these parts as gets twelve shillin' a week? It's the natur' o' things as when they can't do the full day's work they can't have the full day's pay. Look at Adam Blanchard an' Eddard Boyt yon. When they began to falter they

made up their minds to it and went back to eight shillin' a week same as their grandsons do get.'

'Ay,' agreed Robbins bitterly, 'little chaps leavin' school gets eight shillin' a week—it's bwoy's wage, bwoy's wage.'

'An' very good wage too,' retorted the farmer, now as much nettled as was possible for one of his placid nature. 'You ought to take it an' be thankful, Abel Robbins. Many a man 'ud be proud an' glad to earn as much an' have it paid reg'lar. Many an able-bodied man wi' a family,' he added impressively. 'Tis enough an' more than enough for you, a lone man wi' no one dependin' on ye, so to speak.'

'Ay, I am a lone man, I am that,' agreed the shepherd warmly. 'An' why am I a lone man? When I worked for ye first, after your father died, says you, "We must have a single man," says you. "I must have ye on the spot," says you, "with all them dumb things about the place to see to." So I give up walkin' wi' the maid I was coortin' an' give up the notion o' gettin' wed. An' when you got married yourself your missus sent me to lodge in the village.'

'Well, an' why didn't ye get wed then?' returned Joyce, with no less heat. 'Why, that's nigh forty year ago. You have had time, sure, to pick a wife between this an' then.'

Abel stared at him reflectively. 'I'd got used to bein' without one,' he said, dropping his voice. 'I was goin' on thirty then. Ay, it was too late. I'd given up the thought o' women kind, an' 'twouldn't have seemed nait'ral like. But I could wish now that I did ha' married an' had childern to keep me.'

'Ye mit ha' been without 'em,' replied Joyce, once more placid and thoughtful. 'Ay, shepherd, 'tis very like you would. There's nothin' in my opinion more disappointin' an' onsartin than wedlock. There was my mother, a poor, ailing thing, an', Lard, what a family she did have to be sure. The babbies used to be like rabbits—'pon me word they was. But they died most of 'em, an' only a matter o' half-a-dozen o' us grew up. Well now, look at my missus—she be a fine, strong, healthy woman, bain't she? Never had chick nor child, so the sayin' goes. An' my first wife, ye mind her, Abel? She was a straight woman an' a stout un, an' the only child she had was a poor nesh little thing, that withered away, ye may say, as soon as it was born. Ye mightn't a had no children, shepherd, an' if so be ye had wed ye'd have had the wife to keep.'

'That's trew,' assented Abel.

'An' there's another thing,' pursued the farmer, following up his advantage, 'if you'd ha' married when ye was a young un, your sons would be gettin' into years pretty well by now themselves. They'd have wives an' families o' their own. Lard bless you! that they would, an' where 'ud you be among 'em all?'

This flight of imagination was too much for Robbins, who did not attempt to follow it. He came back instead to the point at issue.

'Eight shillin' a week,' he repeated. 'Tis what your father gave me when I first worked for un. Ay, I worked for un for that an' kept myself. You mind the time, master, you were a young un too yourself—there is but a two year atween us, but you've worn well, farmer; a deal better nor me. 'Tis the good food, I daresay—ay, ay, it makes a lot of difference. Good keep makes fat sheep, as the sayin' goes. A man laisses twice as long if his victuals is nourishin'.'

'Come, come, I do 'low you're tough though,' laughed his master good-naturedly. 'Ye'll see me down, maybe. You come of a long-lived race, shepherd.'

'Ay, eight shillin' a week yer father give me,' repeated Robbins, reverting to his original statement, and once more rubbing his hands and blinking his dim eyes as though in the effort to gaze back on that distant past. 'I mind 'twas thought wonderful high pay i' those days; folks was gettin' six shillin' an' five, but yer father said I was wuth it to un; an' when he died an' I went to live yonder with you ye give me eight shillin' a week an' my keep—ay, that was summat, I was hearty enough then. Ye give me that for ten year, an' then ye got wed an' I must shift to the village, an' then ye give me ten shillin' a week. And when I were fifty year of age I up an' I says to you, "Master," says I, "I've a-sarved ye twenty-five year now an' ye must raise me," says I, d'ye mind? So ye rose me two shillin', didn't ye? Well, an' I've had twelve shillin' a week ever since,' he summed up, and his eyes, which had been travelling slowly back over the years, reverted altogether to the present and fixed themselves reproachfully on his master's face. 'An' now I be to have bwoy's pay again, be I?' he queried with an almost childish quiver and droop of the under lip.

'Well, Abel, 'tis onfortunate—terrible onfortunate, 'tis trewly. I'm fair puzzled, I am,' returned the farmer, much moved himself. 'Look at it whichever way you will it don't seem fair, but there's a deal o' difference between the look o' things an' the real natur'

of 'em, shepherd. Look at figures now, an' prices. Lard, when ye count by pence ye seem to have such a lot you're fair puzzled wi' addin' 'em up—a body 'ud need to have twenty fingers instead of a cluster o' five. But put 'em into shillin's an' where are ye? An' put 'em into pounds, ah——' here the farmer drew in his breath with a sucking sound that implied volumes. 'An' yet it be all the same money, Abel.'

The shepherd, looking at him still reproachfully, shook his head.

'I know nothin' about figures, master, all I know is 'tis cruel hard that when I've a-worked all my days for 'ee, Farmer Joyce, you turn on me i' my ancient years. It be hard, an' I can't say no different.'

For the third time that day Mr. Joyce's usually equable temper was disturbed. He now spoke angrily, partly to end the dispute, for the sight of Abel Robbins's haggard, reproachful face was almost more than he could bear, partly because he was vexed at the pertinacity with which the old fellow adhered to his own point of view, partly because his kind heart smote him for the course of action he was about to pursue though his judgment held it to be just.

'Well, 'tis this way, Robbins,' he cried roughly, 'take it or leave it, an' please yourself. I've made ye a fair offer, an' more than a fair offer. I can get another man to do all the work for ten shillin' a week—men be plenty an' work be scarce—'tis clear loss of six shillin' a week out o' my own pocket, an' if I'm willin' to put up with it you should be content; I'll stick to my bargain.'

'Well, I bain't content, master,' cried Robbins, a dull fire coming into his eyes. 'I'd sooner leave—I'd sooner give notice—ay, that I would.'

Farmer Joyce raised hands and eyes to Heaven.

'I never heard such talk from a reasonable man. If you do leave me, how be you a-goin' to live? Who's a-goin' to take you on as a new hand if you leave me? It'll be the House, man. There, don't talk so foolish like. Think it over an' give me your answer o' Saturday. I'll not hear a word on't till then. It's never my way to be hasty. Take time, shepherd; take time. When you've a thought it over you'll find it's not such a bad bargain.'

He turned away and strode down the hill, crook and pitchfork on shoulder. Robbins made no effort to detain him, but stood watching the receding figure in a dazed way till it disappeared at the angle of the lane. Then he walked back slowly to the enclosure where the sheep were still feeding and stood for a moment

or two looking at them according to his custom, but without noticing them.

'I be mazed,' he said to himself; 'I be fair mazed.'

Gradually he woke to the consciousness that his limbs were trembling under him, and his head dizzy, and leaving the sheep pen he entered the hut and sat down on the solitary chair which it contained. In one corner, curled up on an old coat which Robbins sometimes put on when the nights were exceptionally cold, lay his dog, which, on his master's entrance, opened its eyes without raising its head and wagged its tail in welcome. The keen yellow eyes remained fixed on Robbins's face, and after a time the tail ceased wagging, and the dog stiffly rose, shook itself, and pattered across the floor to the shepherd's feet. Finding still no return, it laid its head upon Abel's knee, looking up into his face with such a world of dumb questioning anguish that it at length elicited a response. Robbins stretched out his hand, which still shook oddly, and patted the tawny head.

'Ay, Bob, I see thee,' he said; 'there, down, down,' as the dog, springing up, began to lick his face. 'We can't help it, boy; we're to be chucked out, thee and I. You be gettin' old, too, an' 'tis a sin to be old i' these times. Nobody wants us, Bob. If some folks had their will you an' me 'ud be knocked on the head, Bob, an' I do 'low it 'ud be the best way. I could a'most wish as somebody 'ud come up without my knowing it an' jest—settle me. Livin's poor work when folk be wishin' to be rid on ye.'

Bob slid on to the floor again and laid his old white muzzle on the worn corduroy knee; and Abel continued to stroke his head, but without speaking, until at last the sympathetic eyes closed, and the dog dozed, still pressing close to him. Then Abel suffered his hand to drop and sat as before, staring blankly at the wall in front of him.

Saturday came, one of those mild, south-country days when winter seems to give place to spring; the sky was blue, thrushes were singing; the air was soft and fragrant, almost as with the spicy smell of mountain sap and growing herbage. Farmer Joyce toiled up the hill again with his smock frock thrown open, and his hat on the back of his head. His face, too, was full of a mild radiance as he paused within the gate of the enclosure.

'Well, shepherd?' he said interrogatively.

Robbins had been turning over the litter within the pens, and continued his occupation for a moment or two, the sun gleaming on his white hair and the golden straw. Then he drove the pitch-

fork slowly into the ground and turned round, holding himself erect; his old dog came shambling forward and stood by his side.

'Well, farmer,' said Abel grimly, 'I be goin'.'

His master stood gazing at him, shading his eyes with his hand. 'When be ye goin', shepherd?' he asked still mildly.

'This day week,' returned the shepherd briefly.

'How be goin' to live, Abel?'

Robbins made no reply. Farmer Joyce thumped the gate with his massive brown fist.

'Ye'll starve, Abel, that's what ye'll do.'

'Well, then,' cried Abel, thumping the gate too with his lean old hand, 'I will starve, farmer. I don't care so much if I do starve—livin's weary work, the sooner I be done with it the better.'

'Shepherd, shepherd,' expostulated Farmer Joyce in real distress and perplexity, 'this be fool's talk—this be nothin' but stubbornness. I'll not take such an answer.'

'Ye may take it,' retorted Robbins, thumping the gate again, 'for ye'll not get no other.'

'Well, I be sorry, Abel; I be very sorry—I—I be terrible sorry. You've sarved me faithful, Abel.'

'Ay, master, I do 'low I've sarved 'ee too faithful,' returned Robbins. He betook himself to his pitchfork again, and all his master's remonstrances failed to extract another word.

Sorely perturbed in mind Joyce withdrew at last, and made his way homewards. Throwing down his hat on the kitchen table he informed his wife of the result of the interview.

'I could a'most wish as we hadn't ha' said nothin' about it to the old chap. He won't last long—an' I might ha' made shift to help him a bit.'

'That be real nonsense,' returned his better half. ''Twould be a pretty notion for the master to be a-workin' for the man. Let him go if he's set on't—he'll repent it.'

She set a dish on the table with somewhat unnecessary energy, and her husband held his peace for a moment or two. By-and-bye, however, he put into words that which was in the minds of both.

'We'll be like to repent it, too. Abel be wonderful handy about the place. 'Tis but his j'int's as is scraggled. He be no Sammy, shepherd bain't; his head's wise enough yet if his body be tewly.'

'I do 'low ye didn't take him the right way,' said Mrs. Joyce, looking at her husband with severe disapproval. 'Men-folk be all alike, they've no notion o' things. I'll lay a shillin' ye took

him rough like—told him he weren't good for nothin', an' vexed him so that he were fair dathered. Leave un to me, I'll talk to un a bit, an' see what I can make of him.'

Then she banged another plate upon the table and added somewhat inconsequently, 'I've no patience with un—nor you neither.'

Later in the day she was standing, knitting in hand, watching a brood of very young chickens which had made their appearance at an astonishingly early date. Despite this fact they were hardy, healthy little things, and Mrs. Joyce smiled as she watched them running in and out from under their mother, picking up the meal she threw them with great alertness and enjoyment.

Mrs. Joyce was a tall, large woman with sandy hair, from which the sun now brought out pretty lights. She had the temper which usually accompanies such hair, easily roused and as easily appeased. The mere sight of these yellow, fluffy chickens, the consciousness of the sunshine, and the fragrance and suggestiveness had filled her with a kind of lazy content. The wall-flowers yonder under the kitchen windows were already ablow, she observed. The pigs, too, were coming on nicely; the calf, which was bleating not unmusically in one of the outhouses, had had the good sense to be a heifer. Altogether Mrs. Joyce felt that the world was not a bad place and that life was worth living.

She was in this frame of mind when, chancing to raise her eye, she saw the figure of Shepherd Robbins shambling slowly down the steep 'pinch' of road that led to the farm gate. Perhaps it was the sudden contrast between that gaunt form, that haggard, melancholy face and the surrounding brightness and prosperity that moved her, perhaps because, being a good-hearted woman in the main, she shared her husband's regret at the course events were taking, but at sight of him her anger melted away, and a flood of genuine pity swept over her heart.

She went to meet Robbins at the gate and laid her hand kindly on his arm.

'Why, shepherd,' she said, and her pleasant voice assumed an inflection that was almost tender, 'tis never trew what my husband tells me? You bain't a-thinkin' of leavin' we? We couldn't a-get on without 'ee.'

Sometimes an unexpected kind word from a person whom we have distrusted, and perhaps disliked, carries more weight than a similar one from a friend. Poor Robbins had been dogged and surly enough with the master whom he loved, but when the missus,

with whom he had hitherto lived, as it were, on the defensive, spoke so gently and looked so kind, he gazed back at her astonished, softened, confounded.

And when she said again : 'Why, shepherd, you bain't goin' to desart we?' he suddenly burst into tears.

'No ma'am,' he said brokenly. 'I—I—what be I to do?' The tears were running down his face. 'I d' 'low I'd be loth to leave master.'

'Well, you mustn't think on it,' returned Mrs. Joyce, decidedly. 'We couldn't do without you. See—'tis all a bit o' temper, bain't it? You never trewly meant to give notice?'

'I did, missus; I did,' sobbed the old man. 'It bain't temper neither, it—it be the notion, I think.'

'Yes, that's all it be, sure,' said Mrs. Joyce, not in the least knowing what he meant, but speaking in soothing tones and patting his arm kindly; 'tis but a notion, Abel. Eight shillin' bain't so bad, you know—come. You'll never want as long as you 'arn eight shillin' a week—eight shillin' a week 'll keep you, wunt it?'

'Ay, it'll keep me, missus—it bain't that. But I do 'low it'll be vain hard to go up on pay-day wi' 'em all, an' take laiss nor any of 'em—me that has always took the most. They'll all be castin' eyes at me an' talkin' agin me among theirselves. They'll be sayin', "Shepherd be takin' bwoy's wage. He bain't worth his salt now, shepherd bain't." It's the notion o' that, missus, as I can't stand—nohow.'

'Oh, that's what it be,' returned his mistress, thoughtfully.

The excitement which rendered Robbins so unusually garrulous had flushed his cheeks and given light to his eyes. The woman's heart was touched as she looked at him.

'Ay, ma'am, an' another thing—the lad as I be to have help me, he'll be a cheeky un very like—the ruck o' lads be. He'll think himself as good as me—better mayhap. He'll be gettin' same money as me, ye know. What'll he think o' me at my time o' life? Adam Blanchard and Eddard Boyt they be gettin' same as their grandsons I d' 'low, but there! the boys be their grandsons, an' if they don't treat 'em respectful-like they can give 'em a dressing.'

Mrs. Joyce was silent for a moment, her brows were knit and her lips compressed; she seemed to be turning over a problem in her mind. Suddenly her face lit up.

'Abel,' she said, 'I'm o' your mind arter all. I think instead o' your master cuttin' off your wages he ought to raise you. You

ought to have some rewaard for your long years of faithful service. In my opinion your master ought to raise you to sixteen shillin'.

Shepherd Robbins looked as though he scarcely heard aright.

'Why, missus!' he exclaimed, and paused overcome.

'Yes, if master raises you, nobody couldn't vex you, an' yet nobody couldn't find aught amiss. The master 'ud tell 'em all 'twas but nat'ral after ye bein' wi' us so long an' so punished wi' rheumatics. It's time he should do something more for 'ee. An' so he'd say he's goin' to raise you an' you be goin' to keep a lad.'

Robbins still stared, astonishment and delight vying with each other in his face. 'That 'ud be a different story!' he ejaculated.

'An', you see, you could pick your own bwoy easy then—he'd be your bwoy; you could choose un for yourself, an' send un away if he didn't behave hisself. Would that do ye?' she asked with modest triumph.

'Do me—ah, that it would! I did never expect so much. But master won't hear on it, sure?'

'He will, though—I'll see to that. 'Tis but your due, shepherd. I d' 'low you deserve some reward; we bain't onreasonable!'

She turned quickly, and went into the house, leaving Robbins radiant but still half incredulous. He was forced to believe in his own good fortune, however, when at pay time Farmer Joyce announced the intended promotion of Shepherd Robbins, who, in view of his long service and failing health, was now to receive an increase of wages amounting to four shillings a week.

The shepherd bore himself with becoming modesty under the congratulations of his comrades. One or two of them were disposed to be envious, but for the most part they received the intelligence in an ungrudging spirit.

'They do say that you be goin' to keep a bwoy, shepherd,' remarked the ploughman a little later, gazing at him with respectful admiration.

'Very like I be,' returned Abel loftily. He was not proud, but thoroughly aware of his own importance.

One of the other men, the father of a family, humbly mentioned that he had a fine well-grown lad at home that would, maybe, suit Mr. Robbins as well as another, and Abel graciously promised to think of it.

He went home thoroughly convinced that a piece of most unexpected good luck had befallen him, an opinion which was shared by all his neighbours. As for Mr. and Mrs. Joyce they kept their own counsel.

M. E. FRANCIS.

## *The Great Letter Writers.*

### I.

HORACE WALPOLE.

WHEN George IV. asked Horace Walpole if he was a Freemason and Horace replied, 'No, Sir; I never was anything,' he gave the clue to his character and to his life. When it has been said that he was the third son of the great Sir Robert, born in 1717, educated at Eton and Cambridge, that he travelled in Italy with Gray the poet, that he built and decorated Strawberry Hill, became the fourth Earl of Orford in 1791, and died in 1797, the essential facts of his history have been given. He wrote, indeed, *The Castle of Otranto*, which nobody reads, and *The Mysterious Mother*, which no one could act, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III.*, of which most people have never even heard, and the Letters, which are for all time.

Horace is indeed as much the king of letter writers as Shakespeare is the king of poets. What other man or woman ('Letter writing is a province in which women will always shine superiorly,' says Horace gallantly, and with a smile in his sleeve perhaps) could have written letters sufficient to fill nine fat volumes and never a dull page in them all? Who else could have corresponded with that prosy envoy to Tuscany on whom he had not set eyes 'for nine and thirty years,' and with whom he had 'no acquaintance in common but the Kings and Queens of Europe,' and been at all times inimitably gay, light, easy, witty as he was?

The Letters are in fact the model of what letters should be, and are also, it may be very safely said, what letters never will be again. If they are artificial—and it may be true enough that Horace drew up very careful drafts of them before he sat down to write, and used the very same bon-mot to a great many of his correspondents—they are at least the perfection of art, which is to

seem like nature. One subject flows into another with the most perfect spontaneity. It is impossible to say whether Horace is happier when he is writing of the trial for treason of the brave old rebel Balmerino (where he allows himself to display a little feeling almost) or of the trial for bigamy of the notorious Duchess of Kingston. He glides with an infinitely easy grace from the American War and the very worst prognostications for the future of his own country to a card party at the Countess of Suffolk's, or to a little story that shocks even my Lady Ossory, to whom he sends it and who is in general, it appears, not at all over particular. Now he is describing a 'supper after the opera . . . with a set of the most fashionable company,' now, 'Strawberry at lilac tide,' and now the bootikins he is trying for the relief of the gout from which, or from the dread of which, he is suffering with a great deal of spirit and cynicism all his life. Now it is the affairs—the very unfortunate affairs—of the mad Lord Orford, his nephew, that he is discussing with Mann, or some particularly dogmatic criticism on books or their authors he is laying down (posterity has refuted most of Horace's literary judgments, and one can fancy his perfectly affable indifference to its degenerate opinions), or the character of a servant for which he is writing to Lord Harcourt. But whatever he describes, and he describes everything, or whatever character he gives of men and their works, he first describes, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, himself.

Horace is born artificial, one fancies. He is from the first an odd, puny, sickly, whimsical little being, with none of the coarse robustness of the old Sir Robert and a fatal accusing likeness instead, say some, to a very different person. My Lady, the flighty mother with Lord Hervey's evil name coupled everywhere with hers, can have no reason to love too well the little boy whose childish face and nature at once accuse and condemn her. Sir Robert has his other sons and his coarse pleasures and his great politics to occupy him, and couldn't naturally bother himself much about a weakly child who will die young, says everyone, even if there were no reasons to make him unjust, harsh, and neglectful.

So the boy grows up as solitary children do, odd, precocious, and unnatural, shrinking terrified perhaps from his father when he encounters him by chance on the stairs or in the passages of the great London house and clambering to his nursery window to watch his lady mother, very fine, patched and powdered one may

be sure, going to the Drawing 'Room in her chair. The little Horace is playing at Courts and Kings and Queens when other children are engaged, much more wholesomely, with balls and kites. He experiences at a very early age a queer childish passion to kiss the hand of His Most Gracious and Germanic Majesty George I., and is accordingly taken by his mother (it is one of the few things she is recorded as having done for him, and that quite a doubtful benefit perhaps) to the Mistress and by the Mistress into the august Presence itself. Years after Horace tells the story, remembering the details quite faithfully and dwelling upon it very characteristically as the one supremely important event of his childhood before which all the other events are dwarfed into nothingness. One can see as in a picture that ante-room of Majesty, with the courtiers, who are the courtiers of the Mistress much more than of the King, talking and laughing among themselves in groups, here my Lady Walpole and there my Lord Hervey, and in the centre her great Grace of Kendal, who is perfectly kindly as well as immoral, and calls the little would-be-courtier to her knees and pats him on his head with a fat hand to encourage and brace him up, as it were, for the interview. One can see clearer still the little pale, wondering child, suitably awed and yet so oddly shrewd and observant that even in the Presence itself he looks at Majesty and its surroundings with something of that keenness and sarcasm with which, later on, he regards the whole of life.

After the blazing light of this interview he retires again into the darkness of his solitary childhood and the gloomy London house and daily lessons perhaps (Horace is always busy learning what no lessons can teach him, and has a fine contempt hereafter for the string of facts called knowledge), and is next heard of at Eton, where, as may be supposed, he is not at all popular, not being nearly vigorous enough for games, and having, even as a boy, a pretty turn for cynicism not at all appreciated by the robust English youths, his companions. Then he is grown up, and at Cambridge. After this he makes the famous Italian tour with Gray the poet, who quarrels with him, or with whom he quarrels—it does not matter which—before he returns to England, takes his seat in Parliament (he is such a very dilettante and sarcastic politician as to be in favour with no party), buys the ground near Twickenham and begins the greatest work and enterprise of his life, the building and decoration of Strawberry Hill.

Horace is now exactly thirty years old. He looks out from

his pictures, mostly taken about this period or a little later, with the frail slight figure (he is not indeed so very far removed from the 'decrepit skeleton' he calls himself), the dandified dress, the affected attitude, a high, pale forehead, a mobile mouth very humorous and sarcastic, and eyes intensely shrewd, bright, and penetrating. In the later portraits he is usually holding a pen, negligently as it were, in his frail hand, and has a few books (a very few and idly thrown together to show that Horace is simply the dilettante fine gentleman with a graceful amateur taste for letters and nothing at all in common with the vulgar person who writes seriously for money), and in the background a handsome thunderstorm and the Gothic turrets of Strawberry.

When the place is built—it takes ten years in the building (Horace is always coming down from town, no doubt with a number of emendations in his 'close little hand' on the architectural plans under his arm, to harass the stolid souls of the Georgian builders with his finiking French notions about grottoes and arches)—it is characteristic of the owner as no place has been characteristic of any man before or since. He regards it, it would appear from the Letters, as a woman regards her child or a man his ambition. His heart is set upon it, at least as it is set upon nothing else in the world. It is his cynic pleasure to stake his happiness on a 'little plaything house' and a collection of bric-à-brac china rather than on such bric-à-brac as fame, place, or fortune. He scoffs at himself, as it were, and justifies himself in a breath for his worship of a mistress who is not more slight and much less capricious than any fine lady to whom he might have given his heart. The place has such an irresistible attraction for him that he is always coming down to it in spite of the fact that it is abominably damp and that he is much more ill here than in Arlington Street. He is not deterred from it even when the roads which surround it are impassable to his friends (and Horace is always cynically sociable) and to everybody except highwaymen. He comes to it 'in lilac tide' from a thousand engagements and the middle of the season—in the autumn when the fogs are rising from the river. 'Had an assembly,' says he, 'and the rheumatism . . . and shall plant the roses against my treillage to-morrow.'

He rises here, as everywhere, very late. He can see from his window as he makes that particularly careful toilet, the 'enamelled meadows and filagree hedges,' and the artificial bowers and grottoes of the garden and, no doubt, that gardener, 'incredibly ignorant

and a mule,' who exasperates him for five and twenty years and with whom, somehow, even then he can't find it in his heart to part. He breakfasts presently with his dogs, and the rest of the day, except when he drives at noon (towards town most likely) or 'takes a little card' in the evening with Princess Amelia at Gunnersbury, devotes himself to walking about his grounds or among that immortal collection of vertu with which Strawberry is crowded from roof to cellar.

The collection is itself so bizarre that the infinite delight it affords to the most bizarre creature who ever lived is no wonder perhaps. It ranges with a delightfully cynical impartiality from 'little copies' of Lely's frail beauties to serene-faced Italian Madonnas. Here Horace can stop to contemplate the famous bust of Vespasian or the spurs worn by William III. at the Battle of the Boyne, and there 'Queen Mary's comb and Wolsey's red hat.' Here, too, is the Holbein Chamber and the armour of Francis I., a landscape by Lady Di Beauclerk, a clock given by Henry VIII. to Anne Boleyn, and the dogs modelled in terra cotta by Horace's cousin, Mrs. Damer. There is some delicious new old china too, bought at an auction at Christie's, delightful old books, and the private printing press (which is already flooding the world with fashionable rubbish and a little good matter too, incidentally) for Horace to turn to when the other objects bore him. No doubt when the gout or the other oft infirmities of his nervous body prevent him—as must very often happen—from going out of an evening, he continues compiling his *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, does a *Fugitive Piece* or a couple of pages of the *Historic Doubts*, before he writes to Mann ('Sure Orestes and Pylades if they were inseparable could not pretend to compare to us who have not set eyes on one another for nine and thirty years,' says he) one of those letters which have made him immortal.

His mode of life in Arlington Street (he always leaves Strawberry regretfully and with some tug at the heart-strings, at which he usually remembers to sneer) forms if possible an even better subject for his correspondence than the collection and Strawberry. Here he is in the midst of everything—eternally at 'Masquerades, Ranelaghs, Vauxhalls, and Ridottos,' 'Fandangos, festinos, and regattas,' 'a sumptuous ball at the Pantheon,' silver loo with a princess, 'Pam' with a duchess, in the hearing of the very latest bit of political scandal, of the newest news from America, and the best of good stories (Horace's good stories always leave something

to be desired in point of delicacy and nothing in wit) of the bigamist Maid of Honour. One can but suppose that it is the keen activity of the man's spirit which animates the weakly body to survive such a fury of dissipation, and which makes him even from a sick bed a lord among wits and a brilliant social power. There is, in fact, no society (unless it be tough old Johnson's perhaps) in which he is not much more than welcome.

One can fancy with what eagerness the great ladies of the day watch for the appearance of that lean figure, with its keen bright eyes, mincing walk, dandified dress and thousand affectations of manner, in their drawing-rooms. Horace can talk well, it seems, as he can write well, upon the state of the weather even or the crops. He goes round the company with his snuffbox—a curio picked up at an auction—in his hand, whispering his last 'mot' (which is not always, it appears, as perfectly spontaneous as it sounds) to this woman or to that. He is of the opinion with Lady Sneerwell that the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick, and is at no time the *gauche* scrupulous person who will spoil an epigram to save a reputation. He stands by, as it were, for a minute taking snuff with his gouty fingers and watching the effect of his own wit before he crosses over to tell George Selwyn or 'pretty Lady Craven' (the very highest ladies in the land listen to the most dubious anecdotes with perfect pleasure and complacency) the last Court scandal.

The great name he bears admits him into the very highest political circles, where he finds out quite early in his life that 'a Whig may be a fool and a Tory must be so.' He is for many years on terms of familiar friendship with Princess Amelia, growing old at Gunnersbury, and plays at 'faro, for which there is a rage,' any number of times with ladies much more influential than princesses. He is at Court continually, and having kissed the hand of George I. lives to talk with George IV. and William IV. He sees in his youth the beautiful heroines of De Grammont and great Sarah of Marlborough. He mixes, in fact, all his life with persons whose names, for a great variety of reasons, have become immortal. He is always haunting the best clubs and the best societies. No man who ever lived, lived so much a life of fashion, and spent his every spare moment despising and chronicling it.

The character of Horace Walpole is filled indeed with a thousand contradictions. His opinions both of the men of his time, the world they live in, and of a thousand abstract questions

besides, are as odd and contradictory as the man himself, and must somewhat astonish the persons to whom he expresses them with a perfect openness. He has in the world of letters at least a partiality for his friends—not a little unexpected in such a cynic worldling—which makes him find dull Mann of Tuscany a wit and *spirituel*, turns Conway into a hero, and a number of vastly inferior and long since forgotten authors into geniuses of the very first water. It is not a little to the credit of Horace's heart—and much more to the credit of his judgment than most of his criticisms—that he expresses, not once but a hundred times, a most sincere admiration for the parts and the 'frugal note of Gray,' in spite of that old quarrel which the poet—only—never forgives. As for his admiration of Madame de Sévigné it passes almost at once into a heroine-worship. 'I can scarcely read Grammont and Madame de Sévigné,' says he, 'because I know them by heart.' That ebony cabinet where the good lady kept the pens with which she wrote so many pages of graceful nothingness, is not the least treasured object of the Strawberry collection. Horace is always reiterating her praises. The fluent French-English of his own style (some one says of him that he is the best Frenchman ever born on British soil) suggests that he may even, consciously or unconsciously, model his writing on hers. As for my Lord Chesterfield, that other rival letter-writer, Horace is 'much in doubt of his Lordship's wit since I have finished his letters,' while he can't speak of my Lady Mary Wortley Montagu without spite and slander. There is scarcely one of his notable contemporaries on whom he does not somewhere or other express his views. Here is 'Boswell, the quintessence of busybodies,' and Goldsmith, 'an idiot with once or twice a fit of parts.' One day he is polishing his courtliness as it were, to write the panegyric to Gibbon on the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*, and the next complimenting serious Miss More (Horace's correspondence with the admirable Hannah is so dreadfully polite and artificial as to suggest that he found her much too worthy to be attractive) on that 'charming and very genteel poem the *Bas Bleu*.' Here again he is almost losing his composure over the 'brutal speeches,' 'fustian' style and 'teeth-breaking diction of Johnson,' or writing, as a literary opinion to go down the ages, and for the express benefit of the seriously learned person, that 'an epic poem is the art of being as long as possible in telling an uninteresting story.'

All Horace's notions, indeed, are at variance with the ordinary

ideas of the ordinary person. Even as to his health, he is always doctoring himself with cold water and abstinence in an age when such treatment is taken to be the one thing that kills. He will walk about the gardens at Strawberry—though ‘summer has set in with its usual severity’—without either hat or great coat, and, what is far more aggravating, outlives all his contemporaries to tell the tale. He defies the faculty in the most unorthodox manner all his life; won’t have anything to do with their pills and their potions, their everlasting bleedings and their pompous ignorance, and is always recommending on his own account a quack nostrum called James’s powder (which cures all diseases or none, according to fancy), and the famous bootikins for the relief of the gout, from which everyone of any ancestry suffers as a matter of course.

Horace’s philosophy—light and yet with a deeper note too in it sometimes—and the bizarre nature of his views upon life, offend, no doubt, many other persons besides Macaulay. Horry is such a fool, for instance, that he isn’t at all minded to be great, and is very much minded to be happy. He is like everybody else in that he knows independence and obscurity and a little fortune mean content, and like nobody else in that he acts according to that knowledge. He watches in town perhaps at those fine parties—did ever man go to so many?—his friends intriguing for power, hanging feverishly on a great man’s frown or smile, ‘wading’ sometimes ‘through every kennel to keep one’s place,’ and sacrificing youth, health, peace, for that ‘momentary rattle,’ ambition. He has no stake in the great game himself. He is only the onlooker who sees most of it: and he goes back to Twickenham, where, having played with the dogs and visited Mrs. Clive (if the roads permit) at Little Strawberry, he incorporates into a letter his views of the play. ‘The more garlands you wear the sooner you may be sacrificed.’ ‘As an acquaintance the world amuses me, it is horrible to be its master or its slave.’ ‘I was born at the top of the world; have long been nobody and am content to be so.’ ‘There is no wisdom comparable to that of exchanging the realities of life for dreams.’ ‘Honours make one a slave to etiquette and powers to solicitation.’ ‘I never wished to be *anybody*, that is, anything . . . persisted in my own nothinghood. I hated Parliament, resolved to quit it, and did: was told I should repent, but never have . . . The sum of all is that I am content with a small house and a small garden, and being nobody,’ and he throws down his pen (which is

to make him somebody after all), and spends the evening, not ill-satisfied, scribbling notes in the margin of some old folio he is reading, with the little dogs at his feet, the pet squirrel sipping cream from a saucer on the table, and the 'tattling house-keeper,' quiet for a while, in the kitchens.

What the real nature of the man is under that shrewd and equable philosophy it is hard to say. Most people find, and truly perhaps, that Horace has nothing much better than philosophy to help him through life, that his religion is not a little tainted with the fashionable infidelity of the day, and that when he has made his bow, as it were, to the Deity by a reference to His existence in a parenthesis, he feels himself to have discharged his duty to good taste and the Almighty. Horace isn't very magnanimous either. It is not good to be his enemy. To be whipped with his easy stinging satire and laughing wit and contempt, would be better no doubt than to be poisoned with Pope's venom or lashed with Swift's fury. But that is all. Horace mocks so wickedly at the weak moral points and the physical and mental failings and the little secret motives of his acquaintance, that it is no wonder that posterity, as well as his contemporaries, distrusts him somehow, forgets how much worse is his bark than his bite, and that he had, for instance, a supreme filial reverence and affection where a lack of it would have been very excusable, a loyalty to his own flesh and blood, and 'for his friends a most tender, generous, and faithful heart.' He is always writing in words of the fondest pride and admiration of the 'great parts' of that great father whose neglect and harshness embittered his childhood. He speaks invariably with an infinite tenderness of that light mother; and can't bring himself to forgive my Lady Wortley Montagu (the malice is not wholly unaimable somehow), because she was the friend of that mother's rival, the Skerrit; or because she is, with her husband, the rigorous enemy of Sir Robert. Horace will give up his cards at the Princess's too, or, what is much more difficult, leave Strawberry in its spring loveliness, and the printing press, and the collection, and the *Historic Doubts*, which are only half written, and when he is himself gouty and suffering, to see to the miserable affairs of Lord Orford, his nephew, who is mad, drunken, and disreputable as usual and will never be anything else. As for his friendship with Mann, that at least survives an absence which would kill most friendships certainly; and if Horace Walpole *did* find the other Horace rather a convenient outlet as it were for

his own over-bubbling wit and anecdote, and knew that Mann was going to keep the letters—for posterity—it must be remembered that Horace Walpole had to endure on his side the purgatory of wading through Mann's dull answers. Horace, too, is the very sincere friend of the rival wit George Selwyn, takes with a rare magnanimity the whole blame of that quarrel with Gray upon himself, has a fine affection, unimpaired by time, for Conway and Conway's daughter; for his niece, Lady Waldegrave; for that charming and disreputable old blind woman at Paris, and—what a contradiction in that cynic heart!—for all little children.

He is a great lover of dogs too—Patapan, Tonton, and Rosette (the last the legacy of Madame du Deffand), are certainly the most spoil of their species, and run all over Strawberry after their master to the detriment, one would have thought, of the prim gardens and the vertu.

When Rosette dies presently, Horace sends the most touching epitaph on a dog ever written perhaps to my Lord Nuneham. 'It has no merit,' he says, 'for it is an imitation, but in coming from the heart if ever epitaph did, and therefore your dogmanity will not dislike it.'

'Sweetest roses of the year  
Strew around my Rose's bier;  
Calmly may the dust repose  
Of my faithful pretty Rose.'

The opening lines at least have the oddest unlikeness to the popular conception of Horace Walpole, if they have some affinity with the man who is the friend and playfellow of little children, and can't find it in his heart to turn off an old servant or to give up an old ally.

That Horace has a heart not incapable of greater emotions than sorrow for a dog's death is scarcely to be doubted. He takes such infinite pains to fence it round as it were with his levity and his philosophy. 'All visions that comfort one are desirable,' he says, 'the conditions of mortality do not bear being pried into.' 'Old age is like dipping one in Styx: not above the breadth of one's heel is left vulnerable.' 'One seldom conquers one's passions till time has delivered them bound hand and foot.' 'It is a folly to be unhappy at anything when felicity itself is such a phantom.' And over and over again 'The world is a comedy to those that think, and a tragedy to those that feel.' The words are those not of the man who cannot himself feel, but of the

man afraid of feeling; who has seen other lives shattered by passions, and will hide his own from such storms behind his hobbies and his collection, an easy selfishness, a light contempt for the deeper things of life, and a resolution reiterated a thousand times and kept faithfully, to be 'indifferent to everything serious' and 'eager' about nothing but trifles.

There is a report that in early life Horace falls in love with one of the beautiful Fermors, and not being at that time very eligible from a matrimonial point of view, has his suit refused by the lady's mother. If there is any foundation in the story, who shall say? It is true indeed that whenever Horace alludes to my Lady Pomfret it is in terms highly uncomplimentary and spiteful; but then it is Horace's fashion to defame and abuse many persons who have done him no kind of harm: and Mama Pomfret very likely may be as innocent as any of them. It is certainly true that by the time Horace is thirty years old he has Strawberry for a mistress, honestly platonic affections for two or three cultivated women, the most charming compliments and elegancies (if not too much chivalrous respect) for many more, and the dogs, and his lazy authorship and comfortable masculine household, and the garden and the curios, and a bevy of bachelor friends to keep him as he is. He does not seem to miss the absence of the female element, in early life at all events. He gets out of life, one would rather think, as much enjoyment as most people, and has his love of literature (a resource from many tribulations), thrilling *Otranto* (it thrilled Horace and his generation at least) half finished, a little party at Mrs. Delany's to meet Fanny Burney to look forward to in the evening, plenty of stories and tittle-tattle always provided by the Court, admiring strangers coming to see Strawberry, and the most witty and amusing acquaintances and friends.

Horace is getting old when he first sees the two good angels of his life (his experience of good angels having been hitherto strictly limited), the Miss Berrys. His acquaintance with them ripens quickly into friendship. It is not difficult to fancy the eagerness with which Horace—weaker now in health and cut off a good deal from the world which he has loved—looks forward to the visits of these gay, fresh, sympathetic, girlish companions. He entertains them no doubt with a thousand stories of the world as it was forty, fifty, sixty years ago. He shows them the collection—they are cultivated as well as charming and can appreciate

it. He writes his reminiscences for them. He writes of them in terms of fondest eulogy. He writes to them those inimitable letters, half playful, half tender, and yet with an eager yearning affection, not a little pathetic, peeping between the lines in spite of himself. 'I jumped for joy,' he says—'that is, my heart did, which is all that remains of me that is in statu jumpante—at the receipt of your letter.' He is dreadfully anxious about their health and their safety when they are travelling abroad, for instance. He misses them more than he says even. He is nearing that time, in fact, when even Strawberry, his mistress, can be nothing to him and a little human affection everything. He is infinitely grateful that his 'wives,' as he calls them, come out of the crowd that is hurrying past, fast growing indifferent to the dying old wit who was not so very long ago the centre of its assemblies with his 'mots' in all mouths, touch him as it were with their kind hands, wait on him in his weariness of mind and body, and prefer his old stories to all the gaieties of the world. His sense of humour is to the last too strong for him to fancy himself—crippled and dying—in love. His letters, which are filled with the warmest affection, are never the letters of a lover. It is rather in a tender gratitude for all her goodness that he lays his coronet (that new and unexpected coronet), at Miss Berry's feet, and urges her, not once, but many times, to marry him only that she may wear it, and it is, one fancies, to the lasting credit of human nature that neither sister will accept any such reward, and both desire no prouder claim on fame than to have been Horace Walpole's friends.

Horace's health, which has long been, even for him, wretched, gets rapidly worse now. He doesn't forget, indeed, to allude to it with his usual gaiety when he is writing—and he is always writing—to the Berrys. But there is a cry, somehow, in the jest, and one can fancy beneath that mask of comedy, which he has chosen to wear all his life and won't be coward enough to take off now, a face dreadful, lean, dying, and tragic. He sits in his chair by the hour together, perhaps, dreaming vaguely of old stories he has heard and of old friends who have died. When anyone comes to see him he rouses for a minute into some faint reflection of his brilliant cynic self, and relapses into apathy. He is in Berkeley Square now, and misses the collection and the gardens and the silver streak of Thames (which he was wont to thank God piously was between him and the Duchess of Queensberry) not at all. His gorgeous day is run, in fact. He is almost eighty years old.

He looks at the world with dull eyes which see nothing. At the last the keen mind is the prey of dreadful delusions, which the watchers round his bed—for there are such, tender and faithful to the end—cannot dispel. One is glad almost when the kindly shroud of death falls at length over that grim picture of the wit dying witless, of the spoiled favourite of drawing-rooms crying that he is left to perish alone like a dog, and for some one to have pity on him. He dies, and lives a name for ever.

There is, perhaps, no man who has been more used and abused by posterity than Horace Walpole. Every historian quotes him and paints his picture of Georgian society from the Letters, and every historian adds in a foot-note of dreadful severity a remark to the effect that Horace was the most unreliable, spiteful, prejudiced, tittle-tattling, light-minded creature. Lord Macaulay (who himself wrote a History with which he would not be satisfied unless it should 'supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies') is sadly upset in that brilliant and incomparable essay with the levity of Horace, who recorded gossip to amuse two girls and 'fancied he was writing history,' and positively thought 'politics a game where each man plays for himself,' and a game not worth the winning. The serious person is vexed because Horace is so volatile ('It is one of the bad effects of living in one's own time,' says he, 'that one never knows the truth of it till one is dead!'—which is incurably volatile, for instance), or takes exception to the 'tinsel parts' which Horace was so characteristically proud were not gold. The moral wish to know what he did with his talents and his opportunities and his influence; and every little penny-a-liner in sixpenny literary encyclopædias may be found gravely apologising, as it were, to the respectable for having taken even a quarter of a column's notice of such a ribald, gossipy, fine gentleman.

But it remains, not the less, that the Letters are a possession for ever. Is it a dull world, filled with *ennui* and boredom? Take down one of the volumes, and you will wait with Horace feverishly for the last news of the war in America, before he takes you to Ranelagh or Vauxhall, illuminated brilliantly, where are George Selwyn, perhaps, and Kitty Clive, and that easy beauty, my Lady Ossory, with her mask in her hand and her lips smiling.

Your author comes out of the shades and stands beside you. He is alive, a reality. A fop and humbug, very likely, selfish, dilettante, and trifling, who does not at all want to improve you, or correct you, or ennoble you, but who will take you out of

yourself as no one else can. Be a little thankful that he is not the earnest soul his critics would have him. Do not expect more from him than wit, ease, charm, and fancy, a touch all light and cynic, a brilliant glimpse of that age, gay and perfumed, with its careless heart and tripping feet—and when you hear the name of Horace Walpole you will recognise a friend's.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

*(To be continued.)*

## *Some Poisons and their Prevention.*

THE scientific interest in toxins and anti-toxins shows no signs of abatement; in fact, this subject may be justifiably described in popular phraseology as the Klondyke of the investigator, so keen is the competition for obtaining and working the new 'claims' which pioneer research enthusiasts are constantly engaged in 'pegging out.'

Despite, however, the extraordinary interest which this subject has aroused in scientific circles all over the world, nearly ten years have elapsed since two brothers made the curious discovery that the blood of eels contained a highly poisonous principle, and the memoir containing this remarkable announcement has remained until comparatively recently buried in the Italian journals where it was first published.

Calmette, whose name is so familiar through his studies on serpent venoms and their prevention, was, we believe, the first to call attention to this discovery of the brothers Mosso and give it the prominence it deserves, and both he and other investigators have not only fully confirmed it, but have greatly added to our knowledge concerning the character of the poison contained in eel serum.

The announcement that the blood of eels is poisonous is hardly a comfortable subject for reflection for those who favour this particular form of fish life, and in the present timid temper of the public this article of diet would not improbably share the ill-odour which has befallen the unfortunate oyster and be practically swept from our tables; but although the oyster is perhaps justifiably at present ostracised from our *menus*, taking the nature of the majority of its breeding-grounds into consideration, it would be the height of injustice to measure out a similar drastic treatment to the eel.

That the oyster bred in sewage-contaminated beds may revenge itself upon its consumer by infecting him with the germs of

typhoid has been repeatedly contended, but that the eel, although its unsavoury surroundings are proverbial, can be held responsible for poisoning those who eat it has never, we believe, been seriously maintained.

Public confidence in the eel as an article of food need not be shaken, for it is satisfactory to learn that researches which on the one hand condemn eels as living generators of a highly poisonous substance, on the other hand allay any alarm which they may have reasonably raised by showing that this toxic principle is entirely destroyed in the processes of digestion, and that, therefore, taken through the mouth it is rendered harmless, and only when introduced into the system by inoculation beneath the skin or injected into the peritoneum can it assert its dangerous properties. That the blood of eels is, however, justifiably to be in future classed amongst the toxins, the number of which has of late been so increased, is at once apparent when we learn that about a dozen drops inoculated into a dog weighing about fourteen pounds will destroy the latter in less than ten minutes, whilst pigeons, rabbits, and guinea-pigs similarly treated, only with smaller quantities, also invariably succumb to its lethal action.

Quite recently an endeavour has been made to determine precisely the degree of toxicity possessed by eel's blood, or, in other words, to standardise the poisonous principle contained in it, so as to afford a guide to those experimenting on the subject; and it has been asserted that one cubic centimetre, or about twenty-five drops, injected into the veins of the animal may be regarded as a fatal dose for a rabbit weighing four pounds. But many difficulties surround such an attempt to exactly define the degree of toxic action possessed by such a substance, for, in the first place, the blood varies in respect to this property in different eels, whilst it also differs widely in character at different stages of the life of the fish. This seasonable variation in toxic character has been noticed in the case of viper venom, which has been shown to be far more lethal in action when collected from snakes in the spring of the year than in the winter months.

The toxic substance contained in eel serum was originally called by its discoverers, the Mosso brothers, *ittio-tossina*; and they record the fact that the blood of rabbits and frogs, which animals had succumbed to its action, did not coagulate after death, whilst, curiously, in the case of dogs this abnormal phenomenon was not observed.

There are various means which may be resorted to for destroy-

ing the poisonous principle contained in eel blood, and from a dietetic point of view it is satisfactory to know that heat-exposure for a quarter of an hour to a temperature of from  $136^{\circ}$  to  $172^{\circ}$  Fahr. entirely removes it, whilst its virulence is greatly modified by submitting it for a longer period, twenty-four hours, to a much lower temperature, *i.e.*,  $98.6^{\circ}$  Fahr. It also gradually loses its toxic properties eight days after it has been collected, even when carefully shielded from light, a feature which contrasts favourably with viper venom, which can be kept for more than a year and remains as active as when first derived from the snake. We have seen, also, that its toxic properties invariably succumb to the processes of digestion, so that even if fashion or fad or advertising speculators, backed by scientific names, were to decree that a wealth of nourishment and support was contained in raw eel 'juice,' and the edict went out that it was a desirable and highly important article of invalid diet, the general public may, according to its wont, innocently accept the edict and in this case suffer no evil consequences.

But another and very remarkable method of mitigating the virulence of eel blood, and one which so far has received no explanation, is mentioned by Dr. Wehrmann, of Moscow, who has been lately studying the character of this fish's blood in Dr. Calmette's laboratory at the Pasteur Institute at Lille. Dr. Wehrmann found that if blood serum be taken from animals previously rendered artificially immune to the action of serpent venom, and if some of this so-called anti-venomous serum be injected under the skin of eels some hours before they are killed, the lethal properties of their blood after death are considerably reduced. Thus, an eel weighing about six ounces received subcutaneous injections of five cubic centimetres of anti-venomous serum; after the lapse of four-and-twenty hours, it was killed and bled, and its serum inoculated into animals in the usual way. But whereas two cubic centimetres of normal eel blood sufficed to kill a guinea-pig, this eel's blood had to be administered in *twice* that quantity to produce a fatal result, so that its toxic character had been reduced to a very appreciable extent. The readiness with which eel serum parts with its lethal properties, and the restricted conditions under which they can operate, sufficiently assure us that in the present state of our knowledge there is no danger to be apprehended from this fish, and in the absence of any experiments to show what is the effect on human beings of subcutaneous inoculations of such blood, there is no call for this substance to be scheduled under the Poisons Act. We have, however, by no means exhausted the

extremely curious properties which characterise this material, and these properties are brought to light in a remarkable manner in connection with the investigations which have been carried out to artificially protect animals from its lethal influence, and also in some interesting experiments which have been made to compare the toxicity of eel blood with that of vipers.

It is far from an easy matter to secure for experimental purposes an adequate supply of eel serum, for even a big fish weighing nearly five pounds is not capable of yielding more than about twenty-five cubic centimetres of blood, and from this, only from ten to twelve cubic centimetres of serum are obtainable. Calmette has shown that not only the venom glands of reptiles contain toxic substances, but that the blood of such snakes also possesses lethal properties, only in a far less degree. Curiously, the serum of eels is no less than three times as toxic as the serum of the most vicious viper, and, moreover, produces far more discomfort and pain to the animals into which it is introduced than accompanies the injection of viper blood. In the case of viper blood, its introduction is followed by no symptoms of discomfort, the animal remains quite quiet, growing more and more somnolent, a condition which is followed by an abnormal fall of temperature, ultimately ending in complete collapse, symptoms which, in a much more modified degree, characterise the injection of *heated* eel serum into animals. This heated eel serum, which we have seen is deprived of the objectionable characteristics of ordinary eel serum, produces but very transitory symptoms in animals, occasioning some degree of somnolence, and now and again a reduction in temperature, a condition from which, however, the animals rapidly recover in from two to three hours. Animals, however, treated with this heated eel serum, acquire a power of resisting the lethal action of unheated or ordinary eel serum, and this artificially induced condition of immunity continues for about three days after the completion of the treatment.

The protective properties of this heated serum are not restricted to animals subsequently inoculated with eel serum, but are extended also to animals which afterwards receive injections of viper serum; but of much greater interest and importance is the remarkable fact that heated eel serum, as well as weak doses of the latter not heated but diluted with water, is capable of protecting animals from the fatal consequences of the far more potent viper venom.

It is interesting to note, that although diluted eel serum can

protect an animal from so deadly a poison as viper venom, the serum of vipers is quite unable to afford any such service in the case of animals inoculated with ordinary eel serum. The full complement of protective power obtainable from this treated eel serum is only able to slowly assert itself, for it is necessary for a period of as long as twenty-four hours to elapse after its introduction to ensure the animal's system being thoroughly impregnated with it and enable it to withstand a lethal dose of viper venom.

In this respect, what may be designated treated or protective eel serum differs very markedly from anti-venomous serum, which we have seen is serum derived from animals trained up to withstand fatal doses of serpent venom, for anti-venomous serum acts immediately, and at once confers immunity on an animal from the lethal effects of such venom.

The rapidity with which it acts is indeed one of the most astonishing properties of this particular anti-toxin. Thus if two cubic centimetres of anti-venomous serum be inoculated into the marginal vein of a rabbit's ear, it at once confers upon the latter complete immunity from snake poison. Immediately after the injection of the serum, venom sufficient to destroy an ordinary rabbit in a quarter of an hour may be injected with impunity into the vein of the other ear. But not only are the *protective* powers of this serum so remarkable in their degree, but its *curative* powers, a much more difficult property to establish in a substance, are extraordinarily intense, as may be gathered from the following example: four rabbits were inoculated with a quantity of venom, calculated to destroy them in the space of two hours; one of these four animals was abandoned to its fate, but the other three received, practically at the eleventh hour, viz. just fifteen minutes before the expiration of the calculated two hours' respite, an intravenous injection of a small quantity of anti-venomous serum, only amounting to one four-hundredth part of the weight of each animal respectively. The rabbit which received the venom only died at the end of two hours, whilst the other three remained in perfect health.

But although eel serum can be persuaded to part with its poisonous character and even exercise protective powers over otherwise doomed victims, it is not able to stretch forth a healing hand to the afflicted, for, when once the poison has been introduced, whether it be eel or viper blood, or the venom of snakes, it is absolutely powerless to mitigate or stop in any way the deadly progress of the toxin. Thus whilst eel blood may acquire *protec-*

*tive* properties it cannot acquire *curative* properties, and, therefore, treated eel serum cannot be legitimately enrolled with the anti-toxins which have been elaborated, as, for example, anti-venomous serum, for, to be worthy of such rank, a substance must be capable of wielding both protective and curative powers.

But, although eel serum may under certain conditions protect from the lethal action of serpent venom, eels are not themselves under ordinary circumstances endowed with any power to withstand the influence of this poison, for a good sized eel will succumb to a dose of venom which is sufficient to kill a guinea-pig.

Considerable interest is attached to the fact that anti-venomous serum not only acts as an anti-toxin towards serpent venom, but also towards a poison of quite a different character, such as that present in the normal blood of eels, for this fact tends to confirm the view upheld by some authorities, and particularly by Calmette, that specific toxins do not necessarily only yield to specific anti-toxins, and that a particular anti-toxin may act as such towards divers toxins of varied origin and character. Calmette has brought this point out very clearly in his investigations on the vegetable poison abrine, a very powerful toxin, furnished by the active principle of the seeds or beans of a leguminous plant common in India and South America, and frequently used by the natives in India to revenge themselves on their enemies in poisoning their cattle. Immunising serums of various kinds were selected for testing their protective action on animals poisoned with abrine, and it was found that anti-tetanic, anti-diphtheritic, anti-anthrax, and anti-cholera serums all individually exerted a decided immunising action with regard to this powerful vegetable poison. The hope is, therefore, perhaps not beyond the realm of possibility, that at some future time the complexity of drugs which now figure in the chemists' pharmacopœia may be replaced by a few substances the application of which will come within the means and understanding of all. So far we have not dealt with the artificial immunisation of an animal from the action of eel poison, but this apparently offers very little difficulty, and is accomplished by introducing very small and gradually increasing doses of eel serum into the system, care being taken to proportion the quantity given according to the weight and general condition of the animal to be immunised. A rabbit, for example, treated in the above manner, subsequently yielded a serum which was proved to possess both preventive and curative powers in respect to both eel poison, and viper venom and blood, entitling this so called anti-eel serum to take its place

amongst the anti-toxins, and furnishing yet another instance of a substance exercising its immunising influence over various toxins.

This process of gradually acclimatising, as it were, animals to a particular poison by repeated doses of the same poison, recalls the old proverb—seek your salve where you got your sore—and brings us to a consideration of some of the primitive antecedents of a practice which, at the present time, promises to bring about so profound a revolution in the art of medicine. The modern system of inoculation has, however, arisen quite without reference to such antecedents, which latter were not based upon any scientific laws or considerations, but owed their evolution to local customs and experience handed down from age to age by tradition, and in many cases preserved through a simple faith in the superstitions which surrounded them.

There is perhaps no more interesting chapter in the history and literature of medicine than might be compiled by searching out the early uses of drugs and the primitive application of methods in the art of healing, and tracing their connection, if possible, with the practices which are in vogue at the present day. In the matter of toxins and anti-toxins or modern theories of preventive medicine, there would appear to be a curious link between the methods based upon elaborate scientific inquiries and those which arose through simple experience and expediency.

The idea of a poison, as the old proverb above tells us, being a corrective for itself is no new idea, for we read how in ancient times, for example, the Ophiogenes of the Hellespont were renowned for their immunity to snake poison, and one account of them states particularly that they fed upon serpents, and that to this diet they probably owed their reputed magical art in withstanding the action of serpent venom. Again, a traveller in Egypt, Hasselquist, tells us how the serpent-charmers there eat serpents, making them into a kind of broth, and that invariably before starting off to catch these reptiles they partook of some of it.

Bruce describes how he saw a serpent-charmer in Cairo who allowed himself to be bitten by a viper between the forefinger and the thumb, and made no endeavour whatever to apply remedies, neither did he exhibit the slightest anxiety as to the consequences. That this was no trick, and that the viper was really possessed of all its deadly faculties at the time it bit the man, was proved by the fact that a pelican subsequently bitten by the same animal died in thirteen minutes. Bruce also tells of a man

who 'with his naked hand took a viper from a number of others lying at the bottom of a tub. He put it on his head, then in his breast, and tied it about his neck like a necklace. Next it was made to bite a hen, which died in a few minutes; and, to complete the experiment, the man took it by the neck, and, beginning at the tail, ate it as one does a carrot or a stick of celery, without any seeming repugnance.'

A most interesting account of snake-charmers is given by Drummond Hay in his book on *Western Barbary*, in which he relates his experiences with some of these wonderful individuals belonging to the sect called Eisowy. Members of this sect, he mentions, frequently handled scorpions and poisonous reptiles without fear or hesitation, and they were never attacked by them. He was present at one of their exhibitions of feats with snakes in which they both allowed themselves to be bitten, and provoked the snake to bite them. The charmer thus bitten then in his turn ate or chewed the reptile, which, he remarks, writhing with pain, bit him in the neck and hands till it was actually destroyed by the Eisowy's teeth.

In South Africa snake poison is actually taken as a protection against snake bites, and if we turn to the *Lancet* of the year 1886, we shall find a letter from Mr. Alfred Bolton stating that his curiosity had been aroused by the fact that, while in South Africa cattle and horses frequently died from the effect of snake bites, the natives themselves seldom or never appeared to suffer any inconvenience from such injuries other than would follow any accident which would set up local inflammation. On inquiry he found that they were in the habit of extracting the poison gland from the snake immediately it is killed, squeezing it into their mouths and drinking the secretion, thereby apparently acquiring absolute immunity from snake bites. So impressed was Mr. Bolton by what he observed that he adds, 'I can no longer refuse to believe in the efficacy of the snake virus itself as a remedy against snake poison.'

Savage tribes have learnt from bitter experience how to protect themselves from snake bites, and it is well known that they have a method of inoculation which they employ with success. The Creoles of Surinam use an ointment as a protection against snake bites which is regarded as highly efficacious. It is reputed to consist principally of the pounded head of a rattle-snake, which concoction would therefore include the contents of the venom glands; this is then mixed with the juices of

a certain plant, which addition probably mitigates the intensity of the venom by acting as a diluent. This substance is generally applied by making an incision in the wrist or forearm and rubbing it in, after which individuals thus treated appear to enjoy security from the venom of snake bites.

What applies to serpent venom would also appear to hold good in regard to other poisons, such as that contained in the sting of a bee. This poison is extraordinarily tenacious of its irritant properties, and, unlike eel poison, retains its virulence even when exposed to high temperatures.

An interesting memoir on the immunity of the bee-keeper from the effects of bee poison was published a short time ago by Dr. Langer in a German scientific journal. He issued a number of circulars with questions to be answered, and sent these to more than a hundred bee-keepers in different parts of the country, with the result that 144 stated that they were now immune to bee poison, nine having been fortunately endowed with a natural immunity to this irritant, whilst only 26 out of the whole number applied to stated that they were still susceptible.

This condition of immunity to bee poison is obtained after a varying number of stings have been inflicted, in some cases thirty, at the rate of from three to four a day, are sufficient to ensure freedom from further discomfort, but the inoculations may have to be prolonged up to one hundred stings to secure complete immunity.

In experiments carried out on animals this immunity to bee poison has been also induced by repeated application of the irritant. It was formerly generally supposed that the irritant nature of a bee's sting was due to the presence of formic acid, but inasmuch as bee poison can retain its poisonous character in spite of being submitted to heat, which would effectually volatilise the formic acid present, this assumption must be abandoned, and opinion is more inclined now to regard this irritant substance as partaking of the nature of an alkaloid.

Before closing this brief review of some of the most recent discoveries which have been made in the domain of immunity, we must mention some extremely suggestive and important researches on the poison of tetanus, or lockjaw, which have just emanated from Dr. Roux's laboratory at the Institut Pasteur in Paris.

It will, perhaps, be remembered that Pasteur, when working at hydrophobia, experienced the greatest difficulty in exciting rabies in animals with certainty, and that it was only when the fact of its being a disease which essentially affects the nervous

system of the animal was taken into account that it occurred to him to cultivate the virus in the medium for which it had seemingly the greatest affinity, viz., the nervous tissue of an animal; it was only on taking this step that he succeeded in invariably provoking rabies in the animals under experiment.

In the case of tetanus we have another disease affecting the nerve centres of the body, and although many authentic cases have been cited in which the treatment with anti-tetanic serum has been entirely successful, a great many instances have occurred in which it has been of no avail at all, more especially when the disease has obtained a firm hold on its victim. Now, Dr. Roux has not only been carrying out experiments to ascertain what is the result of directly attacking, as Pasteur did in the case of rabies, the nerve centres of an animal with the tetanus toxin, but he has also taken another and very important step further, and has investigated, not only the action of the toxin, but also that of the anti-toxin on the nerve centres of an animal suffering from tetanus.

In describing the cerebral inoculations which he has conducted on animals, Dr. Roux points out that the operation, in itself, is attended with no pain or even inconvenience to the animal in question, that subsequently it eats with its usual appetite and shows no signs of discomfort.

First, as regards the infection of an animal with the tetanus virus introduced directly into the brain, it has been found that very much smaller quantities produce a fatal result than when subcutaneously inoculated. Thus a rabbit which received two cubic centimetres of the poison under the skin took four days to succumb to tetanus, whilst one-twentieth of the quantity inoculated into the brain sufficed to kill another rabbit of the same size in less than twenty hours.

Another very instructive example of this susceptibility of the nerve-centres for certain poisons is afforded in the case of rats and the toxin of diphtheria. Rats possess a natural immunity from this substance, and can successfully withstand a dose of diphtheria poison introduced under the skin which would infallibly kill several rabbits. This state of immunity, however, entirely disappears when the toxin is brought directly in contact with nervous tissue, for a very small quantity of diphtheria poison—insufficient to cause under ordinary circumstances even a passing swelling at the seat of inoculation—will, when introduced into the brain of a rat, kill the animal.

Again, rabbits are generally credited with possessing high powers of resisting the action of morphia, a large dose of this

substance introduced subcutaneously producing no result whatever. A cerebral inoculation, however, of a minute quantity of morphia causes an immediate reaction, and the animal, after remaining in a more or less dazed condition for several hours, finally succumbs to this drug. Dr. Roux is inclined to regard this difference in the susceptibility exhibited by animals to one and the same poison as being due to a good deal of the toxin, when subcutaneously introduced, failing to reach the nerve centres, it having been destroyed or arrested in the system before it could attack them.

What is the nature of the subtle forces which may so beneficially intervene between the toxin and its victim, has long been a problem which has excited the interest and ingenuity of some of the most brilliant scientific authorities of the day, and it is one which, even in the hands of men like Metchnikoff, is still awaiting a satisfactory solution.

The important point was next approached by Dr. Roux as to whether an animal, successfully trained to withstand large doses of the poison, as ordinarily introduced, could also resist it when directly inoculated into the brain. Is, in fact, the undoubted immunity to tetanus poison which may be possessed by an animal due to the nerve-centres having become insensible to this substance? The answer to this question would appear to be in the negative, for animals artificially protected from tetanus poison introduced under the skin succumbed to a small dose inoculated direct into the brain, which would, otherwise, have not produced even a slight passing tetanic affection of the limb where the inoculation was made. Immense numbers of experiments were made under varying conditions, but the result was fully confirmed, showing that the nerve centres had not acquired any immunity to the poison, although the blood serum of the victims to such cerebral inoculations was proven over and over again to be endowed with strong protective properties against tetanus poison.

The endeavour was then made to, in Dr. Roux's words, 'place the anti-toxin where the toxin is working,' and preserve the vital force of the nervous tissue. To arrest tetanus by substituting cerebral for subcutaneous inoculations of the anti-tetanic serum was the next feat attempted. Several guinea-pigs and rabbits were inoculated subcutaneously with virulent doses of tetanus poison sufficient to kill them in about seventy hours; some were subsequently treated with anti-toxic serum introduced in the ordinary way under the skin, whilst others were inoculated with

from six to seven drops of this protective serum direct into the brain. The results were extraordinarily successful. Although but a few drops of the anti-toxin were used for the *cerebral* inoculations, the animals survived the otherwise fatal doses they had received of the toxin; whilst, out of seventeen guinea-pigs which received *subcutaneous* inoculations of the anti-toxin, only two recovered, and the quantity of the anti-toxin employed reached as much as from ten to twenty cubic centimetres in some of the experiments, contrasting in a remarkable manner with the few drops which sufficed in the case of the cerebral inoculations.

Dr. Roux sums up this splendid result in the following modest words: 'Il ne suffit pas de donner de l'antitoxine, il faut la mettre au bon endroit.'

The significance and far-reaching application of this most important discovery cannot easily be over-estimated—hitherto the preparation of an anti-toxin has been the chief point considered; but Dr. Roux and his able coadjutor, M. A. Borrel, have shown how great may be the results which attend its method of administration, and have opened up an entirely new direction for investigation.

Although the subject of immunity is not by any means wholly a latter-day creation, yet its approach and consideration from a modern point of view, assisted by the resources and equipment provided by modern scientific methods, justifiably entitles this century to claim it as its own discovery.

However brilliant and successful the labours may be of those who will follow in the future, subsequent generations will know how to venerate those great leaders of scientific thought, amongst whom we must rank Pasteur, to whose genius the world owes so great a debt of gratitude, and the vast extent of whose labours cannot be adequately measured at the present day by reason of the restricted scientific horizon which encircles public opinion in this country.

It may be interesting to mention, in this connection, that in the statistics just published of the anti-rabic inoculations conducted in Paris during the past year, out of the 175 foreigners treated at the Institute no less than 83 came from England and 33 from British India. These figures speak for themselves and require no further comment; but that England must follow where she might lead is the inevitable consequence of the short-sighted policy which seeks to strangle scientific research in this country at the bidding of a noisy group of misguided agitators.

G. C. FRANKLAND.

## *Garden Thieves.*

THE man who plants a fruit garden gives hostages to fortune. He realises this fact most acutely perhaps in the late summer, when he lies awake wondering whether thieves, and if so how many, are at his peach trees. For we cannot all have ten-foot brick walls, with broken bottles on the top, round our fruit gardens: and the man who puts his trust in palings, or a hedge, must be content with a percentage of his lawful crop only. Ever since his fruit began to ripen he has been marked down as the victim of the public: for the attitude of the public towards the owner of a garden is peculiar. As a point of abstract ethics, his right to as much of his own fruit as he can gather is freely conceded; but the public claim the balance. It is held no crime, scarcely an offence, to be beforehand with the owner in the plucking. There are grey-headed men, Justices of the Peace, who will narrate with pride their exploits in the matter of orchard-robbing when the century was in its second quarter. They can remember, as a joy of only yesterday, the excited labour of traversing a ploughed field, each foot at every step lifting half a hundredweight of clogging soil, with trousers pockets bulgy and burdened with fruit, and 'Old Smith,' half the field behind, brandishing a cart whip. And the illicit apple still remains the legitimate loot of youth; while in the rare event of the capture of a marauder—for boys are nimble-footed and 'dodgy' as of yore—it is usually the owner who is the more embarrassed of the two. The boy knows exactly what to do and say. He wipes a tearful eye on the sleeve of his coat. He 'didn't know he was doing wrong'; he 'only came in to pick up a windfall.' So the matter ends in a mild cuff on the head and an injunction to be off. The boy stays not upon the order of his going, but goes at once to rejoin his grinning accomplices round the corner, who are audibly munching the apples which he threw over the hedge to them.

In the theft of peaches and other expensive wall-fruit, even a

boy's conscience can discern a slight shade of criminality ; besides, there is greater danger in it. But where is the boy who, having scaled a fence and found unripe apples on one side of him and ripe peaches on the other, would stop to discuss the matter with his conscience? So the owner of a fruit garden will find the honesty of the boys of his neighbourhood in direct ratio to the number of yards of barbed wire and pounds of hooked nails with which he fortifies hedge and palings. But the wire entanglement has not yet been discovered which will keep the boy out of arm's reach of the laden branch. If he tears his clothes, his parents pay for the mending: if he gets the apple it fills his own stomach. We need not insult the boy's intelligence by completing the argument. But boys are not the worst of our garden thieves. Their acquisitiveness is directed by judgment and controlled by the size of their pockets. They do not pluck fruit in order to throw it upon the ground; but having quickly filled their mouths and their pockets, they get over the wall again without delay. Nor do they spoil half the fruit upon a tree by taking a small bite out of each and eating none. When a boy begins to eat an apple he eats it, core, skin, pips, and all. No such saving clauses can be inserted in the indictment against thieves in fur or feathers.

Some of these, indeed, are victims of chronic kleptomania, which impels them to acquire the most incongruous loot. The magpie, for instance, will decorate its domed nest with silver teaspoons and diamond bracelets: but, as the Baboo said, 'Where is the *cui bono*?' The magpie's eggs hatch none the sooner for contact with diamonds or spoons, and when the young have flown, the treasures are forgotten. The monkey is the magpie among mammals. When he pilfers, he turns his own head aside, apparently under the impression that if he cannot see himself stealing no one else can; and no matter what the value of his prize may be, if he wants to scratch his head—and he generally does—he incontinently drops it. Now no man, having acquired his neighbour's diamond bracelets and silver spoons, will leave them at the top of a tree to fall down and be lost for ever among the brambles when the winds of winter blow. Still less would a man who had relieved a stranger of his watch, drop it on the floor when he wished to scratch his head. Yet it is worth noting that those animals and birds which are aimlessly thievish are those which stand at the head of their natural orders for intellect. Among foreign birds, the bower bird indeed almost rises for a season to the level of intelligence of the

suburban householder who 'picks up' pretty things to decorate his house with. It would never be safe to leave a Japanese fan or a bit of blue china within reach of a bower bird. He uses a certain amount of judgment, too, in the selection and arrangement of his spoils, thus proving an exception to the rule that the larceny of the lower orders of creation, except where food is concerned, is an aimless crime, a mere vicious habit.

Who, for instance, could feel any sympathy with a tomtit that stole a cheque? Yet a country gentleman of Cheshire was once sent galloping twenty miles to fetch the police to catch the thief who had stolen a cheque from inside an envelope which was inside his own letter-box in his own hall-gate—all through a tomtit. The envelope and the covering letter were there; but the whereabouts of the cheque might have remained as great a mystery as any Thames Embankment robbery in open daylight, but that when the gentleman and the police arrived and proceeded solemnly to inspect the letter-box, two tomtits were discovered inside. This led to a search, and twenty yards off, lying on the ground, with beak marks upon it, was the cheque. Whether the tomtits had returned to find out in whose name they should forge an endorsement to the cheque is not clear; but this new development of the criminal tendency which has always been latent in the whole race of tits, cannot be too strongly reprobated. Even the jackdaw of Rheims, the 'horrid example' of larcenous birddom, would never have stolen a cheque. When he purloined the cardinal's signet ring, and suffered terribly from the pip when excommunicated for his crime, he had sufficient good feeling to repent heartily and bring back the stolen jewel. Its glitter had appealed, too, more to his sense of beauty than to any sordid love of filthy lucre. He stole the ring to be a thing of beauty and a sparkling joy in his dark niche under the belfry, rather than with a view to pawning or selling it and spending the proceeds in riotous living. So with that other famous thief in feathers—the magpie who stole the spoon while the milkmaid was flirting, and got that daughter of Eve into a deal of trouble—it is altogether unlikely that the bird cared one grub whether the spoon was silver or electroplate. He knew that it would have a very fine appearance among the ragged sticks of his domed nest; and so, as no one was looking, he drew it out from among the others just as gently as if he were playing spelicans, gave three hops and a flap of his wings, and the spoon and the girl's reputation for honesty went away over the fields together. Other

damning instances there are of jackdaw and magpie, the red-legged chough, and even, sad to say, the clerical-gaited raven, being decoyed from the strait path of rectitude by the empty glitter of a gem. Unlike *Æsop's* moralising cock, who, having scratched up a necklace, apostrophised Heaven of the uselessness of such a stroke of luck to him, these sable, solemn fowl seem to have a burglarious twist in their nature over which they have no control. In proportion to their reverend aspect and grave demeanour in their serious suits of black is their eagerness to purloin, at all costs, any bit of tawdry metalware to give a dash of meretricious finery to their bare nests. There may be the germ of civilisation in this. The South Sea Islander, of whose destiny hereafter missionaries appear to entertain no doubt whatever, would in the early days of their acquaintance barter his best wife for a piece of tinfoil and shed a missionary's blood for the sake of the blue glass in his spectacles. Inasmuch, therefore, as the converted Fijian, dressed in broadcloth and square-toed boots, makes a very respectable member of a Christian community, though his grandfather may have worn nothing more than 'a shaggy head of hair, two brass rings, and a necklace of dogs' teeth,' there is yet hope for the jackdaw when civilisation has permeated his system and broken down that brazen sanctity, that impudent assumption of reverend virtue, which at present forms an impenetrable barrier to all attempts at conversion. Speak to a jackdaw mildly but firmly, and he listens to you with a sidelong air of respectful interest. Turn away your head for a moment, and a tug at your bootlace tells you that the hypocritical scamp has tried to steal the metal 'tag' at the end of it. Just in the same way the missionaries have found that, however pious and attentive their savage congregation may be, they have all one eye apiece on the look-out for perquisites. The very analogy teaches us that a jackdaw's case is not hopeless.

With the tomtits who stole the cheque it is sadly otherwise. A cheque can be of no use to a tomtit. Therefore it is obvious that the labour bestowed in pecking open an envelope and abstracting the valuable enclosure was the result of either mental aberration or deliberate malice. There is much in the tomtit's general behaviour to support the more lenient view that he is not strictly responsible for his actions. His favourite upside-down attitude betokens a total lack of self-respect. His habit of making a nest in April inside a fountain spout, whence in May the first jet of water shoots him and his brood three feet into the

air, indicates a complete disregard of the general fitness of things. His practice of dashing at, instead of away from, a hawk, shows that he has far passed that point of courage where the sublime reaches the ridiculous. He will assemble in chattering gangs at the hanging of a tin can when all other birds take to sudden flight. Altogether the tomtit's character is such a medley of ridiculous contradictions that it would be quite possible to argue that the cheque in question could have been stolen for no reason save a mad one. Unfortunately there is on record a fatal precedent which sadly undermines this plea of unsound mind. A five-pound note was once found interwoven with the straws in the nest of a London sparrow. Now, no one in his senses would accuse the London sparrow of being out of *his* mind. A shrewder bird, or one with a keener eye to the malicious annoyance of other people, it would be impossible to name. That a London sparrow should have stolen a banknote therefore proves that it is possible for small birds to steal valuable scraps of paper out of pure mischief and malice. It would be flying in the face of all experience to attribute this particular action of the sparrow to any weaker motive. It would be giving the lie to his whole life of aggravating larceny. Therefore it must be considered that the tomtits of Cheshire may have been actuated by the same base purpose, until they can prove the contrary.

In a garden, however, cheques do not grow on currant bushes, and the tomtit has there no share of the sparrow's deserved obloquy. No doubt he pulls off an unnecessary multitude of buds to save himself the trouble of hunting for those which are worm-eaten, and when the filberts are ripening he pays far too much attention to the nut bushes; but the bulk of his working days are spent in examining tiny crevices and curled-up leaves, where man's eyes could never penetrate, for lurking insects. The sparrow is another bird entirely. During the winter he lives by taking toll of our garnered corn from rick or granary, or assembles in crowds to devour the crumbs put out for the robins; and with the return of spring he commences proceedings for the year by eating all the yellow crocuses. Thence onward his voyages from kitchen garden to grain field, from flower bed to fruit garden, are pure piracy. While the gardener is busy with the seed-bed, the robin hops cheerily close to his hand, watching with cocked head for disturbed worm or grub: while the sparrows chirp to each other from the bushes round about. His task ended, the bent-back gardener plods off to fetch string and paper for bird-scares,

and a whole flock of sparrows descend the moment he is round the corner, and unearth the seeds far more quickly than he had buried them. When he returns they sit in rows on the wall sharpening their beaks, dispersing only when the strings of fluttering paper over the seed-bed show it is no use waiting longer. Then they disperse in ones and twos to look for grubs and eat early lettuces; for it is an aggravating peculiarity of the bird that he always eats most of what you can spare least.

The solitary merit of the sparrow compared with some other garden thieves is that he only steals to eat. He has too keen an eye for the main chance to waste his time in destroying food which may be good to eat to-morrow; and though his appetite is enormous it has limits. Consequently when food is plentiful the sparrow spends most of his day chirping in a fat comfortable way from the corner of the house to an answering friend behind the stable chimney. In this he is unlike that degraded bird, the green parrot of India. With the arrowy flight of a swallow he descends upon your choicest mango tree; and though you cannot distinguish him among the shady green branches, all the while he is there you will hear the 'phud, phud' of falling, unripe fruit. Then, with a shriek, the parrot will whirl off to some distant grainfield—to get something to eat—leaving the ground littered with spoiled fruit which he has not even tasted, the stalks being simply bitten through. In a very mild degree the Indian green parrot has his English counterparts among our fruit trees. The blackbird audaciously and the thrush with stealth will peck a hole in scores of ripening fruits without eating one; the jackdaw and rook will pluck and drop six walnuts for one that either takes the trouble to excavate. The squirrel will spend the livelong August day hurrying to and from the filbert bushes. In breathless haste he bites off a bunch of nuts, leaps to the ground, and scurries away with arching tail. Quickly scooping a hole in the ground, he deposits the nut-bunch therein, covers it up, and rushes back for another. The American humorist tells of the perplexity of a blue jay which began to carry off acorns and drop them into the convenient hole which it had found. The fact that the hole was through the roof of a house did not seem to matter to the bird. In the English marsh-tit you may see the same mania for senseless secreting of stolen goods. Put out a plateful of crumbs 'for the birds,' and one small marsh-tit will empty it, flying off with each fragment to any dark bush and dropping it down among the branches and then hurrying back for more. No one would

grudge any small bird a square meal of breadcrumbs or even of fruit; but in winter no one wants to cut up loaves for marsh-tits to play with, while in summer the discovery that birds have been 'at' your fruit or peas generally means that there are none left for you.

'Oh, yes!' exclaimed the old lady whose gardener was explaining that there were no cherries, because the birds had taken them all; 'two-legged birds, I expect—two-legged thieves, I mean'; and having intended to be very ironical she sailed away into the house, with a lingering doubt, nevertheless, as to the exactitude with which the irony had been conveyed. Yet by thus indicating that two-legged thieves and two-legged birds were almost interchangeable expressions, the old lady blundered upon the truth of human nature in feathers. Never is a bird more human than when he is an incorrigible thief; and the Wild Birds' Protection Act, which condones the ordinary peculations of birddom, goes on all fours with the modern tendency to make things comfortable for the human rogue. The owner of a fruit garden has nowadays no more right than a schoolmaster to spank a small boy caught *flagrante delicto*, with the weight of much undigested fruit lying heavy on his conscience or a little lower down, and it will not be long before the law debars him also from taking summary measures with the birds. He will be told that it is more becoming in a civilised Christian to remonstrate mildly with the blackbirds that denude the cherry trees, to address the pigeon in the peas as an erring brother, and to throw loud shouts instead of brickbats after a buccaneering hen among the lettuces. It is the human nature of a hen to annex everything that is edible; and when men were as uneducated as poor poultry are to-day, they behaved in a manner not dissimilar. When the benefits of a School Board education shall have been extended to the poultry yard, it will be time to insist that your neighbour's hen's knowledge of Latin shall embrace the difference between *meum* and *tuum*.

But the hen can scarcely, from a philosophical point of view, be classed as a bird: she is such an unmitigated fool. She is a fowl of the ground, and has no share with the fowls of the air in the excuse for their presence in the garden, that when they are not stealing they are ornamental. 'Quod non tetigit, ornavit'—'what he left alone, he adorned'—might have been said even of a blackbird in a cherry tree, and, like the roving troubadour of old, he oftentimes pays us richly for his meals in song. Even the sparrow sings sometimes—a much better song than most people

are aware of—but her best enemies—she has no friends—could not use that word to describe the vocalisation of the hen. For these and other reasons it would be well if, in future Natural Histories, the hen could be moved from among the Birds and placed among the Insects. It would be an act of poetic justice.

And the mention of insects in connection with garden thefts opens up a vista of horrid recollections. The hairy brown caterpillar curled up in the lettuce; the speckly green caterpillar boiled with the cabbage; the pink grub bitten in half in the plum; the yellowish grub which has tunnelled the apple, and the white grub in the raspberry; the spotted grubs that wreck the choicest roses, and the fat striped caterpillar that strips the fuchsia; the earwig that eats the dahlia, and the slug and the snail that eat everything and leave a track of slime to let you know it; the sawfly grubs that strip your gooseberry bushes 'as bare as the day they were born,' and the loathly cuckoo-spit insect, with its triangular parent who jumps in any direction except the one you expect; the multitudinous blight which descends like the Assyrian upon your marshalled ranks of peas; the woodlouse, and the centipede, and—the wasp! There are some people who affect to see good in everything, and will tell you that the wasp has his good points to counterbalance the *one* very bad point at the end of his tail. One enthusiastic writer says that he is a 'handsome fellow in livery of gold and black.' But to be able to see clearly the handsomeness of the wasp you must take him in your hand; and you do not as a rule do it twice. But even if the wasp were as handsome as a peacock, and as inoffensive as a daddy-long-legs, he would still be the worst of pests in a fruit garden. Some evil spirit guides him to each ripening peach, plum, or pear just a week before it is fit to pluck; and when the owner's turn comes he finds that the fair outer semblance of a fine fruit on the wall is but a tinted sepulchre enclosing the indecently naked stone with a fragment of much-gnawed pulp attaching it to the deceptively blooming outer skin. If the owner does not at the same time get a wasp sting in the thumb, he is lucky. No; the wasp may be, as Bacon says of the ant, 'a wise thing for itself,' but it certainly is 'a shrewd thing in a garden.'

Yet when the fruit owner looks back over the calendar of the year, the retrospect bristles with such multitudes of flying, buzzing, creeping, crawling, singing, squeaking, stinging, biting, smell-

ing things, with legs and wings and beaks and teeth and nippers and stings of all sorts and size, and every one of them finding its apparent excuse for existence in the plunder of his garden, that even the wasp and the sparrow, the slug and the hen, sink into the monotonous perspective of the procession of thieves. The offence of one offender alone stands out in his memory with the startling vividness of yesterday, stamped in the indelible ink of black ingratitude. Fido was a dog on whose honest loyalty the luckless fruit-grower would have staked his whole orchard and kitchen-garden. It was 'faithful Fido' who returned coughing and sneezing, with his mouth full of feathers, after expelling the neighbour's hen from among the peas. It was faithful Fido who killed the rat that burrowed among the roots of the raspberries. It was Fido again who very nearly caught the cat that danced on the seed-beds and scraped up the spring onions. Faithful Fido it was, again, who hunted the rabbit that gnawed the bark off the apricot trees, and might have even caught the rabbit if he had not been too fat to get through the hedge. But, alas, when the strawberries disappeared in a most unaccountable manner every morning and a watch was set, it was Fido, faithless Fido, who was discovered sniffing along the rows of the strawberry beds and munching up all the ripe ones! As Launce says: 'When a man's servant shall play the cur with him, look you, it goes hard: one that I brought up of a puppy; one that I saved from drowning, when three or four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it. I have taught him, even as one would say precisely, "thus would I teach a dog"'—and then to steal strawberries!

This was the crowning catastrophe, the crushing blow. A man may bear the hard knocks of avowed adversaries and the buffeting of unkind fate, but to have been deceived in his faithful dog, the 'friend of man'—a traitor and a garden robber!—saps the very foundation of human confidence. When therefore you may chance to see a man wild-eyed and muttering to himself, for ever looking nervously this way and that for fancied foes, an Ishmael-like man, of weary, hunted aspect, you may safely conclude that, unless there may be other reasons to account for his manner and appearance, he probably owns a fruit garden.

E. KAY ROBINSON.

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

WHAT the learned have decided as to the authenticity of M. de Rougemont's travels, I do not yet know. When this gentleman was 'heckled' at the British Association, the more learned of his questioners appeared to be the least sceptical. What he said about the manners and customs of his black friends was, for the most part, already quite familiar to me. Indeed I think I could write a fanciful account of adventures among the Australian blacks, which might deceive the very elect of anthropology. Native words for ordinary things I could easily get up by aid of the many glossaries which have been published. Of course I could not write Australian prose, or verse, which would pass muster, but M. de Rougemont was not put to this severe test. His narrative needs independent European corroboration, for any intelligent person could 'cram' all the knowledge of tribal practices, just as people can study any period of past history, domestic or foreign. We do not believe that St. Germain actually lived with Mary Stuart, or Pius II., or Henry VIII., on the strength of his anecdotes about these characters. Nor can we accept a traveller's tale, if in any degree suspicious, because he knows how black men live, die, dance, fight, worship, marry, and so forth. I would not insinuate a word against M. de Rougemont's good faith, but, if any one is in doubt, he will call for independent European corroboration of the corroborates and the rest of the narrative.

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Mr. Nutt is about to publish a new instalment of Mrs. Langloh Parker's curious and touching Australian legends. I have written a few lines of introductory matter, which need not prevent me (being uninterested financially) from asking the curious to look into a volume so rich in the materials of poetry. These lowest of all mankind, in physical civilisation, possess ideas and express emotions of universal interest and of strange natural charm. Mr. Max Müller,

lately, was pleased to say, in flattering terms, that I have tried to popularise savage literature (oral literature of course)—a topic too much neglected. I can only speak as one who knows it ‘in cribs,’ but I think the matter richly deserves the attention of all serious students of literature. In Mrs. Langloh Parker’s legends we find the germinal ideas of all poetry, romance, and even of religion, as we now understand these things, and, with these, much tender and kindly human sentiment. Barely emerging from palæolithic culture, the blacks are as human, as affectionate, and as sensitive to nature, to poetry, to hope and religious belief as ourselves, or even more so than most of us. I take the good faith of the lady’s translations for granted, though, of course, in a scientific sense, verification by philological experts is desirable. Mrs. Langloh Parker’s work, I think, for private reasons, will stand every test, and she opens, for Australia, the volume which Dr. Brinton, Mr. Cushing, and others have opened for America.

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Mr. William Black, in his *Wild Eelin*, makes his charming heroine write new words for the song with the strange refrain,

An’ ye’ll tak’ the high road, and I’ll tak’ the laigh,  
And I’ll be in Scotland before ye;  
But me and my true love will never meet again,  
By the bonnie, bonnie banks o’ Loch Lomond.

Certainly I can make no coherent sense out of the ordinary version (in *Songs of the North*). ‘It is nothing but trash,’ says Eelin, though ‘the refrain and the air seem to be genuine.’ ‘Where in purple hue the Highland hills we view,’ is, perhaps, ‘rubbish,’ in Eelin’s opinion. But, alas, I cannot find much sense in her own pretty variant, about Love Willie, Huntly, and Kilbranda. Mr. Black appears to have neglected the original version in *The Chevalier’s Delight*.<sup>1</sup>

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Here the mystery is cleared up. The speaker is one of two acquitted Highland prisoners, released from Carlisle gaol, and entering Scotland by different routes. We are also enabled to understand *why* he and his true love will never meet again by the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond. The young lady is dead of a heart that broke on Drumossie Day, and the hero vows to

<sup>1</sup> Bath, 1748. No printer’s name.

enlist under Sergeant Môr Cameron (hung about 1753) and take vengeance. Here is the recovered song :

There's an ending o' the dance, and fair Morag's safe in France,  
And the Clans they hae paid the lawing,  
And the wuddy has her ain, and we twa are left alane,  
Free o' Carlisle gaol in the dawning.

So ye'll tak the high road, and I'll tak the laigh,  
An' I'll be in Scotland before ye;  
But me and my true love will never meet again,  
By the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomond.

For my love's heart brake in twa, when she kenned the Cause's fa',  
And she sleeps where there's never nane shall waken,  
Where the glen lies a' in wrack, wi' the houses toom and black,  
And her father's ha's forsaken.

*Chorus.*

While there's heather on the bill shall my vengeance ne'er be still,  
While a bush hides the glint o' a gun, lad;  
Wi' the men o' Sergeant Môr shall I work to pay the score,  
Till I wither on the wuddy in the sun, lad!

*Chorus.*

\* \* \*

Here Morag is the fond Highland cryptic name of the Prince, and the wuddy, of course, is the gallows. As to the tune, the learned may wrangle; it is not printed with the words in *The Chevalier's Delight*, and I am nothing less than musical.

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Talking of bushes hiding guns, I have just revisited the spot on the old grass-grown marshy road where David Balfour met Campbell of Glenure, and saw him shot—by whom? Mr. Stevenson says that the people know, but keep the secret. I myself rather suspected Sergeant Môr Cameron. But, delightful to relate, I have heard another version, perfectly thrilling, with a romantic sequel, showing how the Curse is still working busily. This is as it should be, but the legend is the deepest of all secrets, never to be revealed. I must confess that, though creditable as a romantic invention to whoever invented it, I do not, as at present advised, believe a word of the narrative.

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Another traveller's tale, excelling the Rougemont epic, I find in a recent number of a geographical magazine. Certain tribes of the Upper Amazon practise wireless telegraphy. In each hut (planted a mile apart) there is a kind of square bottle-shaped apparatus, buried in the floor to three quarters of its height. The apparatus is charged with layers of different materials, including one of indiarubber. When the owner wants to communicate with a house a mile away, he taps the top of the apparatus with a club, the head of which is also made of layers of various odd materials. The sound is hardly audible at the outside of the house, but repeats itself in the apparatus a mile away, and conversation is carried on by taps, according to a code, the answering sound, of course, echoing in the machine at the first house. A German traveller is responsible for these interesting statements. He seems to think that a stratum of rock carries the vibrations, but we must wait for further researches, which the jealousy of the natives is apt to impede.

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My friend and constant trouncer, Dr. Hay Fleming, has been pitching into me, in *The Contemporary Review*, for my views of Cardinal Beaton and some of his contemporaries. As usual, I had made some blunders in dates—pettifogging matters, as Sir Arthur says in *The Antiquary*. These I shall correct, but my central argument, especially as to the old charge of the forgery of the King's will by the Cardinal, remains, I think, quite unharmed. It would not be wise to carry the dispute into a *third* magazine, nor shall I do so, but the poor Cardinal was exactly in the position of Captain Dreyfus, as far as the evidence against both gentlemen is in our possession. Both were accused, neither had a *fair* trial (the Cardinal had none at all), the incriminating documents were never made public, and, if Colonel Henry forged against Captain Dreyfus, the one document against the Cardinal, now known, was found among the family papers of his enemy, who was advised by the most notoriously unscrupulous of all conceivable rascals and traitors, Sir George Douglas. He may have had the document, for other reasons most unsatisfactory, forged, to enable him (in his own words) to 'get on the Cardinal's back.' The whole story of the forgery rests on nothing but the word of the Regent Arran, who had made the Cardinal Chancellor of Scotland after the crime was committed and detected (if ever it was committed at all), but before the Cardinal was thrown into

prison. No wonder that Hill Burton calls Arran's story 'dubious.' I am confident that I could secure a verdict of 'Not Guilty' for my venerated client in any court in Britain. However, the revision of the verdict of most historians is certainly not a matter of palpitating popular interest.

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Some amateur has sent me my Horoscope, out of which I can make no sense. I certainly did not 'gain by a death, feminine,' in 1884, and have no wish to gain by a death either feminine or masculine. The stars announce that I am a humorist of powerful passions (controlled), and had a disappointment of a tender character in 1863. If so,

The worst and the best of it this is,  
That neither is most to blame,  
For she has forgotten my kisses,  
And I have forgotten her name.

Spurred to labour, I got 'a fellowship at twenty.' Alas! I never was so precocious. 'Twenty-seventh degree of *Pisces* rising.' They may rise, but they usually 'rise short.' I am 'generous, romantic, rather shy, and extravagant in money matters.' Finally, I 'would make a fine astrologer,' if I abandoned my mind to it. This is not likely, as arithmetic appears to come into astrology. Perhaps one could get predictions right by getting sums wrong. Assuredly, as far as I am concerned, the astrologer is utterly at sea.

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An Australian correspondent sends me a version of the well-known story of 'Fisher's Ghost,' which sat upon a rail seventy years ago. He comes, after examining documents, to exactly the same conclusion as I did in a recent investigation. The spectre was never alluded to at the trial of Fisher's murderer, but no explanation was given as to *why* the rail was examined for blood-spots. In the legend, which was certainly current and printed very soon after the events, the ghost himself pointed out the spot to one Farley, who informed the magistrates, who led on black trackers, who discovered the body of Fisher. Further than that, actual evidence does not go. In Mrs. Besant's magazine, called, I think, *The Theosophist*, somebody recently told the story, adding that the spectre was *yellow*! I know no evidence for that Yellow Terror.

\* \* \*

The controversy as to salmon feeding in fresh water seems to myself to result in some such conclusion as this: the fish, for physiological reasons, does not feed in such a way as to support life. If he did, he would clear out all the smaller fry, and be more mischievous to trout than pike are. But who ever saw salmon chasing trout? The fish, however, retains a kind of survival of an appetite, a ghost of a desire for food awakens now and then (pretty seldom) in certain conditions of atmosphere and water. He will then take a natural fly or a worm—he is actually caught with both lures—and will snap at an artificial fly, an artificial minnow, and so on. He feeds a little—that is to say, in an amateur fashion, but he does not support life by feeding. He lives on his condition, and develops matrimonial tendencies. This theory explains the facts: first, that food is never found in a salmon's interior; next, that he does, occasionally, take a little food, natural or highly artificial. Colquhoun, in *The Moor and the Loch*, has a story of a salmon which rose at young swallows, fallen out of the nest overhead. At artificial lures the fish perhaps occasionally snaps out of playful curiosity. I could wish that, whatever his motive, the salmon would snap a little more frequently.

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The Editor has discovered this model of a proposal of marriage, written by C. C— (Collins?) in 1746. The lady does not seem to have given Mr. Collins (an ancestor of Miss Austen's clerical hero) the slightest encouragement. With all his circumlocution, he comes very frankly to the point, after all, in 'the sincere and natural language of the heart,' and his sentence has a Johnsonian turn. One cannot help sympathising with a lover so modest and earnest, if verbose and unreasonably addicted to dwelling on the medicinal virtues of tar water. His postscript, one fears, was fatal to his chances; on the other hand, he made a good husband to some other lady, who had no sense of humour, did not dislike an amateur physician, and made a moderate use of Bishop Berkeley's famous specific.

'DEAR MADAM,—How natural and pleasing a thing it is to reflect upon those for whom we have a singular Regard and how impossible to reflect without contriving some Method of conveying our Thoughts to the Person upon whom they are employ'd with so much Pleasure. But w<sup>n</sup> I suffer this natural Inclination to carry me so far as insensibly to lead me from thinking upon Miss C—, to write to her, will she not imagine I strain it beyond its

proper Pitch, and too far transgress the Bounds of good Breeding. I confes Madam you have a heavy Charge against me, but I am no more able to reflect upon those lovely and engaging Qualities you are Mistress of without being pleased with and admiring them, than I able to admire and be pleased without confessing that I am so; let me lay (in Obedience to your Command's) w<sup>t</sup> Restraint I can upon my Heart and Tongue, I perceive my Hand will prove treacherous to them both, by discovering w<sup>t</sup> the one dictates, and the other fain would speak. I have indeed endeavour'd to comply with the severest Injunctions you could possibly lay me under, and have not only denied my self the Pleasure of waiting upon you, but have even strove to forget I ever saw you, or at least to check the Progress of that Passion, w<sup>ch</sup> was the Consequence of it; but how fruitless the attempt! the glowing Flame instead of being extinguished by the Resistance it has met with, burns the brighter, breaks through all Restraint, and forces me to tell you plainly that I love you; and that my Happiness is entirely at your Disposal.

'This is the sincere and natural Language of my Heart, and I think it impossible to enjoy the pleasing Satisfaction of seeing or hearing you, without readily acknowledging your Power to please, and that in my Eye you as far excel the rest of Womankind, as the tender Passion you have inspired me with, exceeds the Bounds of common Friendship.

'But notwithstanding my Thoughts are almost constantly employ'd upon this Subject, I cannot help now and then turning them upon my self, beholding the little insignificant Figure I make and wondring at my own Vanity, who have Nothing to recommend me, and yet suffer my Heart to grow big with the flattering Expectation of obtaining that person, who has every amiable Quality of her own Sex, and is worthy of the most deserving and most perfect of ours.

'This being really the Case, I find I have nothing to depend upon but your Goodness, and as I cannot throw off this outward Form, and appear the very Man you merit, let me entreat you to lose all my Blemishes in thinking upon this one good Quality, that the most worthy most accomplish'd Person upon Earth, cannot possibly love you with a more tender and sincere Affection than Dear Madam,

'Your most obedient humble Servant,

'C—— C——.

'I have begg'd the favour of Mrs. F—— to put this into your Hands not with any Design of carrying on a private Correspondence, but as I did not well know how to direct to you; and indeed my Pretensions are too honourable to stand in need of any secret Methods to support them.

'You had fine Weather for your Journey, and I hope you found your self well at the End of it; yet I must remind you of the only Promice I could ever obtain from you that you would establish and confirm your Health by a moderate Use of Tar Water.'

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Truth—late, but not too late—compels me to admit that I forged the 'Bonnie Banks,' and did not find the song in the volume cited. But singers say that they go to the tune, and anybody may try the experiment.

ANDREW LANG.

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to*

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